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Lefebvre et al.

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(54) **AIR INTAKE AND EXHAUST SYSTEMS FOR A SNOWMOBILE ENGINE**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC F02B 29/0425; F02M 35/10157; F02M 35/162; B62M 27/02; B62M 29/00; B62M 2027/023

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See application file for complete search history.

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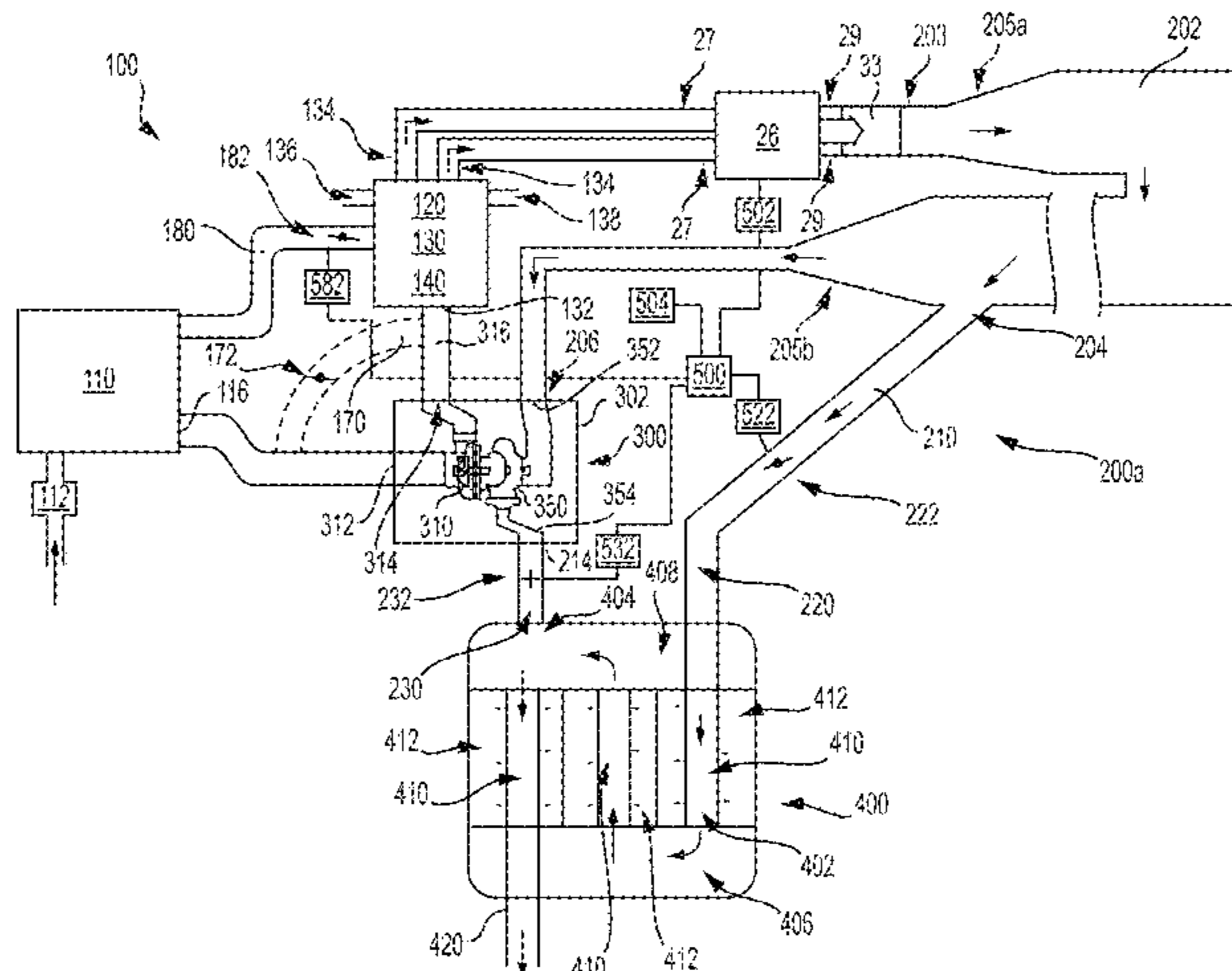
(63) Continuation of application No. 16/031,126, filed on Jul. 10, 2018, now Pat. No. 10,865,700.
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(Continued)

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A snowmobile including a frame; at least one ski; an engine with an engine air inlet and an exhaust outlet; a turbocharger including an exhaust turbine, and a compressor. An air intake system includes a first flow path connecting the compressor to the atmosphere; a second flow path connecting the compressor to the engine air inlet; an intake bypass flow path connecting atmosphere to the engine air inlet for bypassing the compressor; and an intake bypass valve for controlling the flow through the intake bypass flow path. An exhaust system includes a third flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the exhaust turbine; a fourth flow path connecting the exhaust turbine to the atmosphere; an exhaust bypass flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the atmosphere for at least partially bypassing the exhaust turbine;
(Continued)



and an exhaust bypass valve for controlling the flow through the exhaust bypass flow path.

25 Claims, 18 Drawing Sheets

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B62M 29/00 (2006.01)
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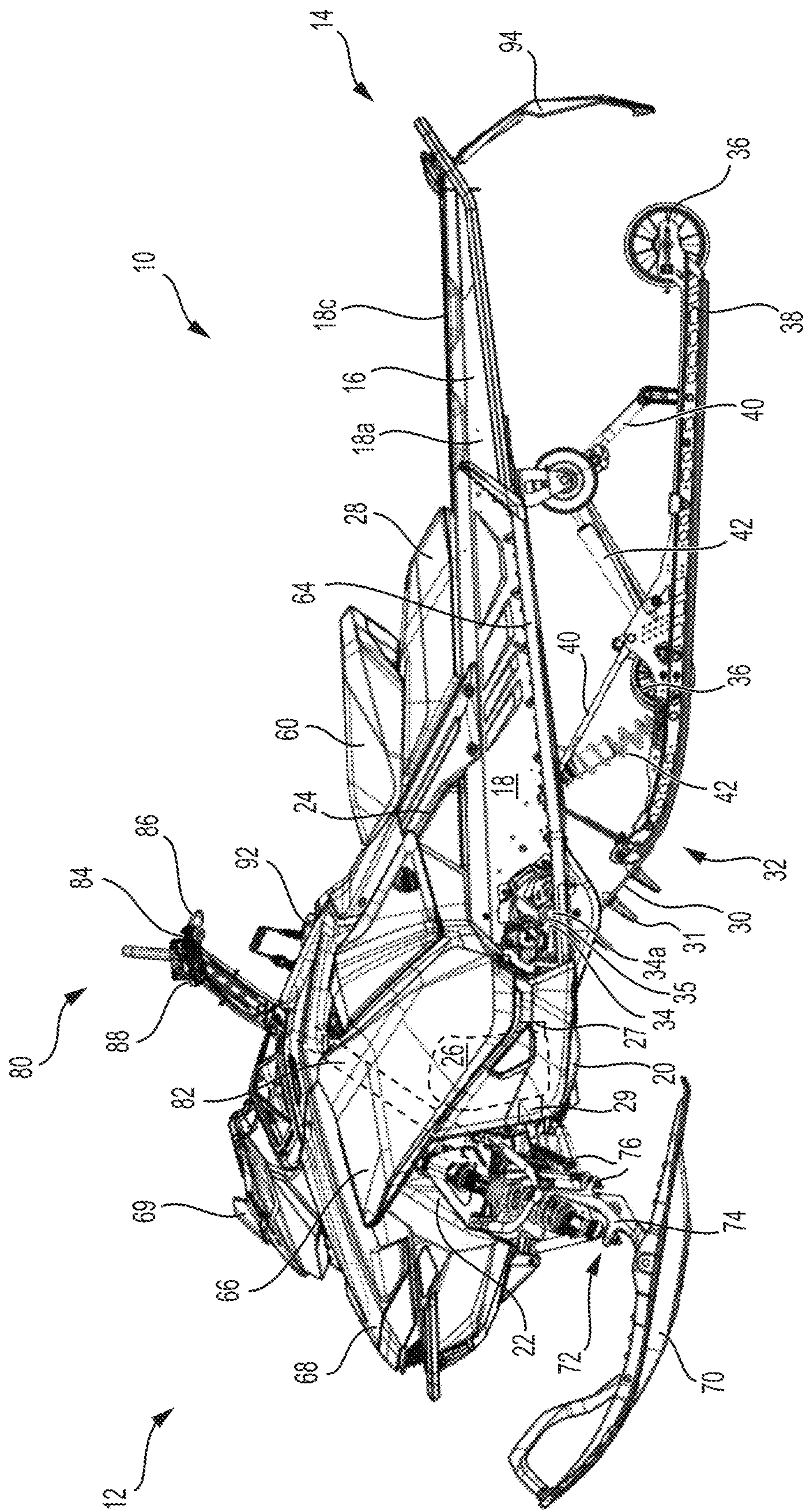


FIG. 1

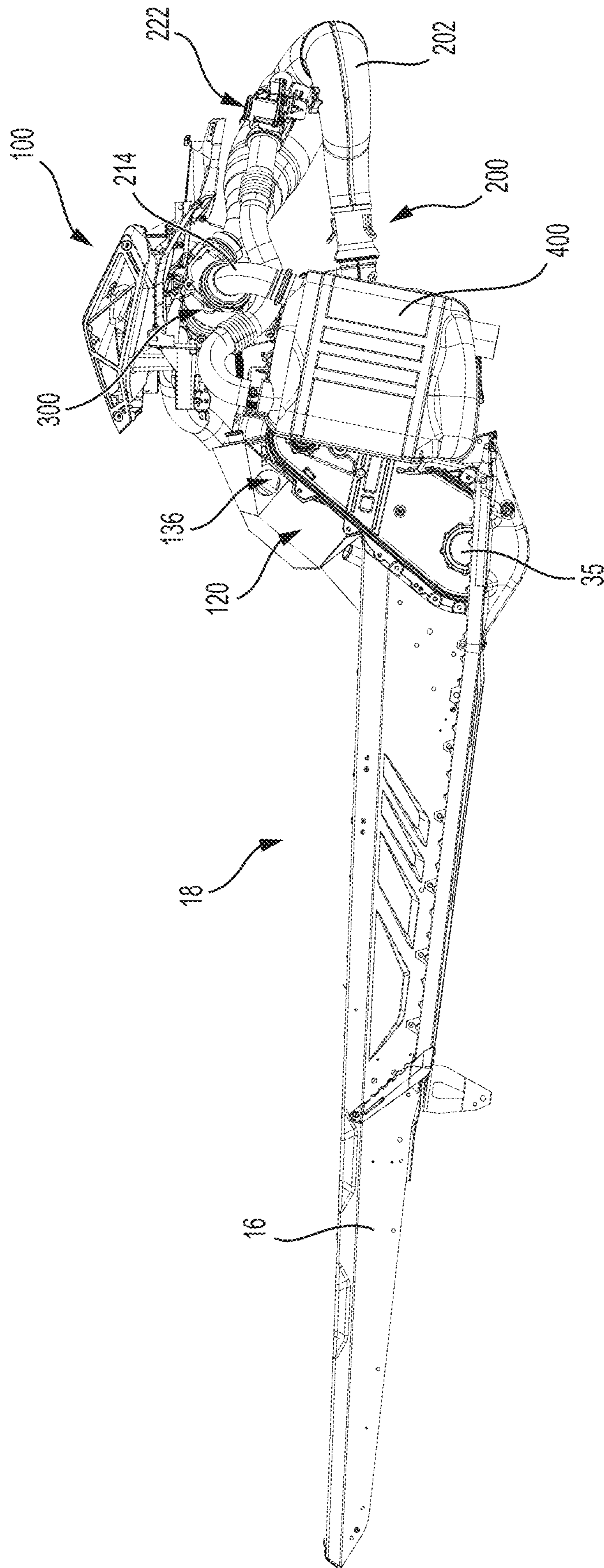


FIG. 2

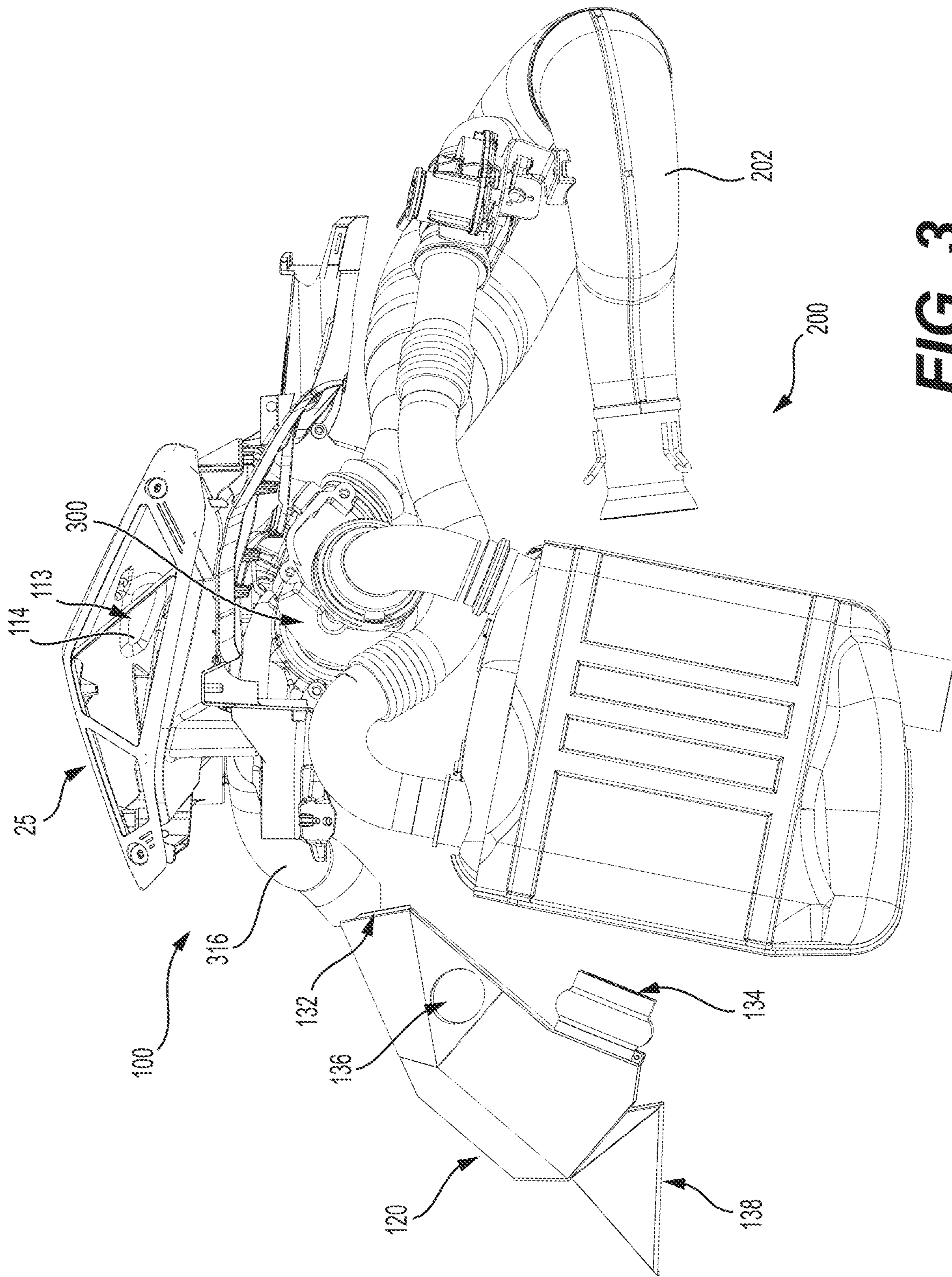


FIG. 3

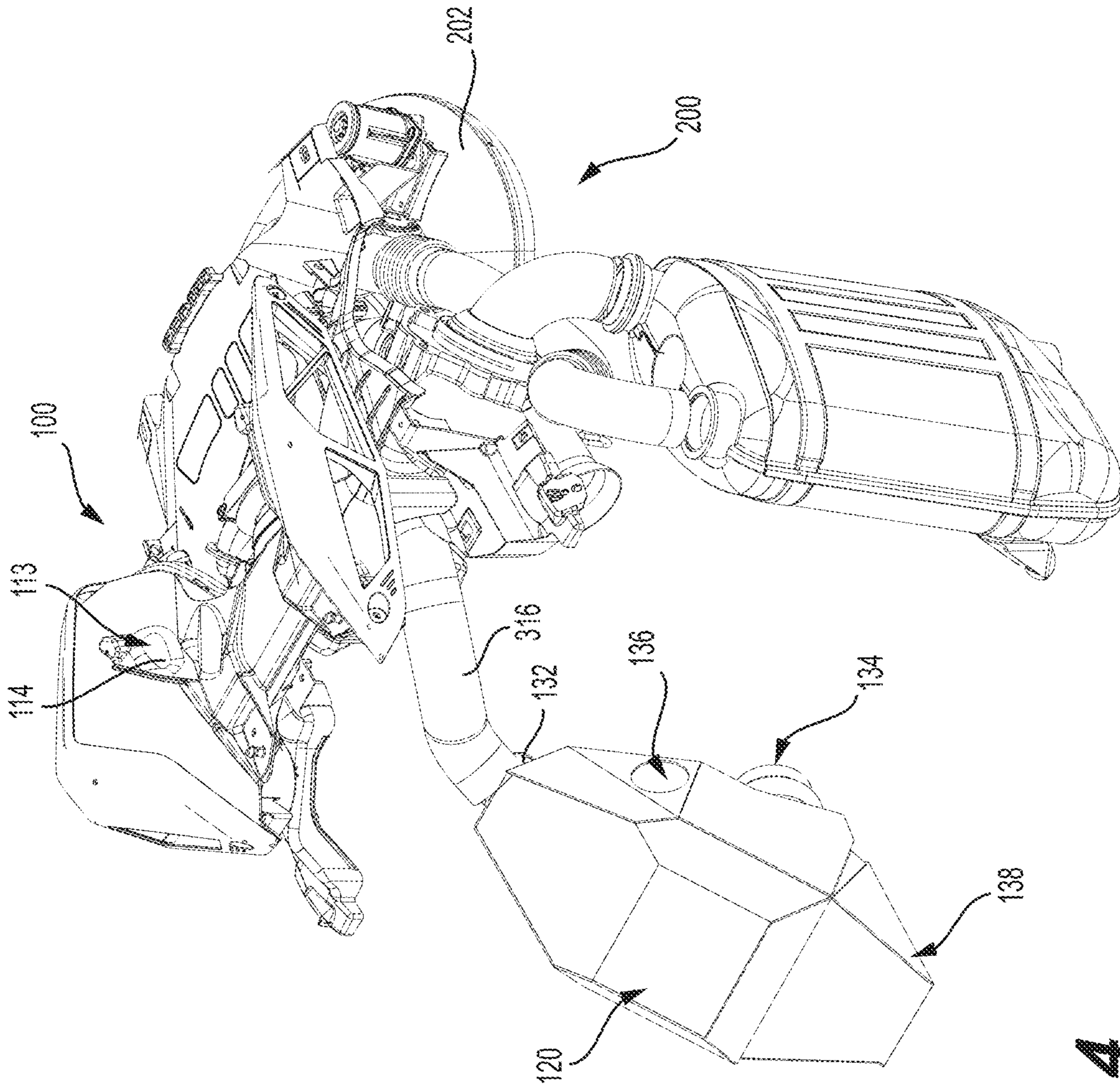


FIG. 4

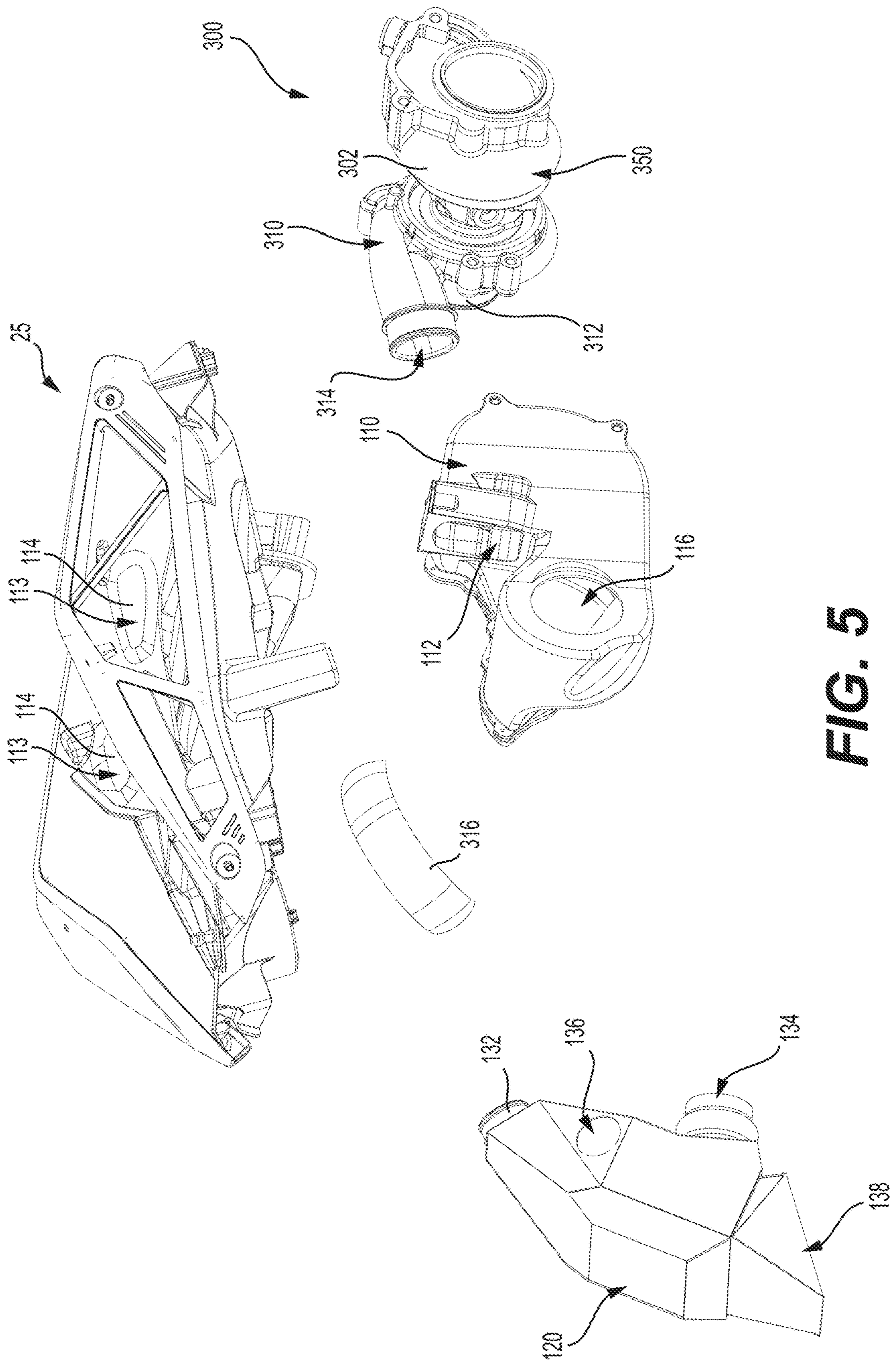


FIG. 5

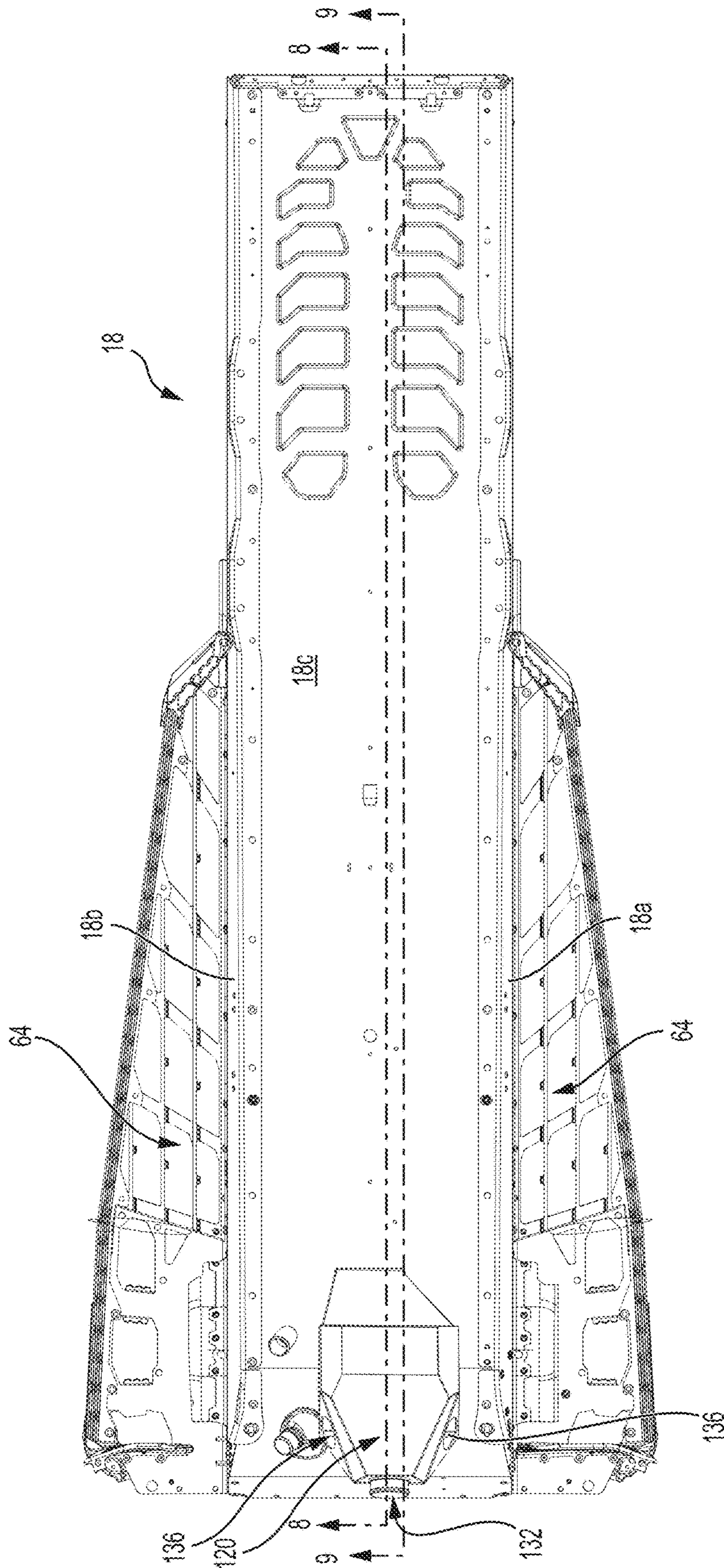


FIG. 6

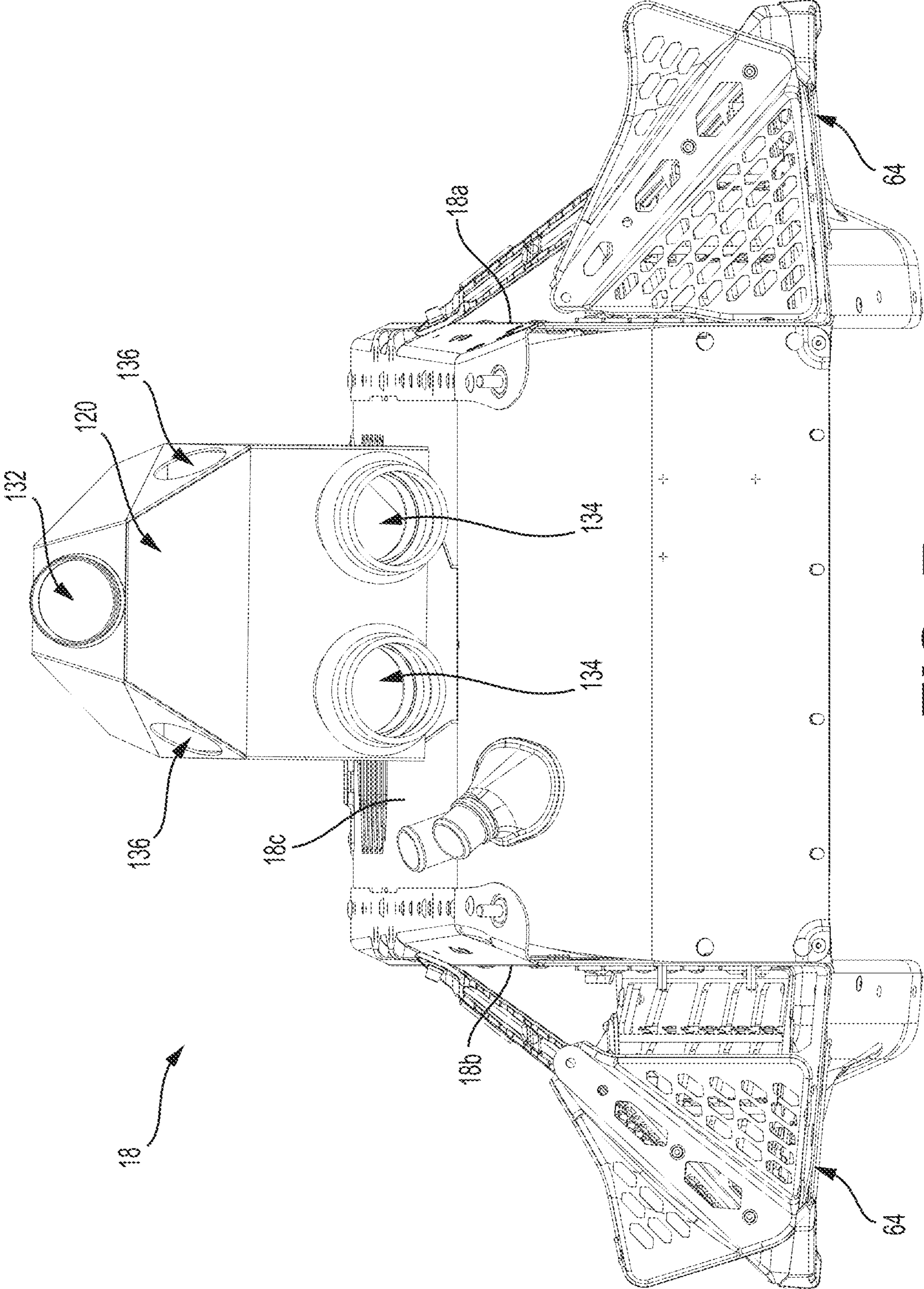


FIG. 7

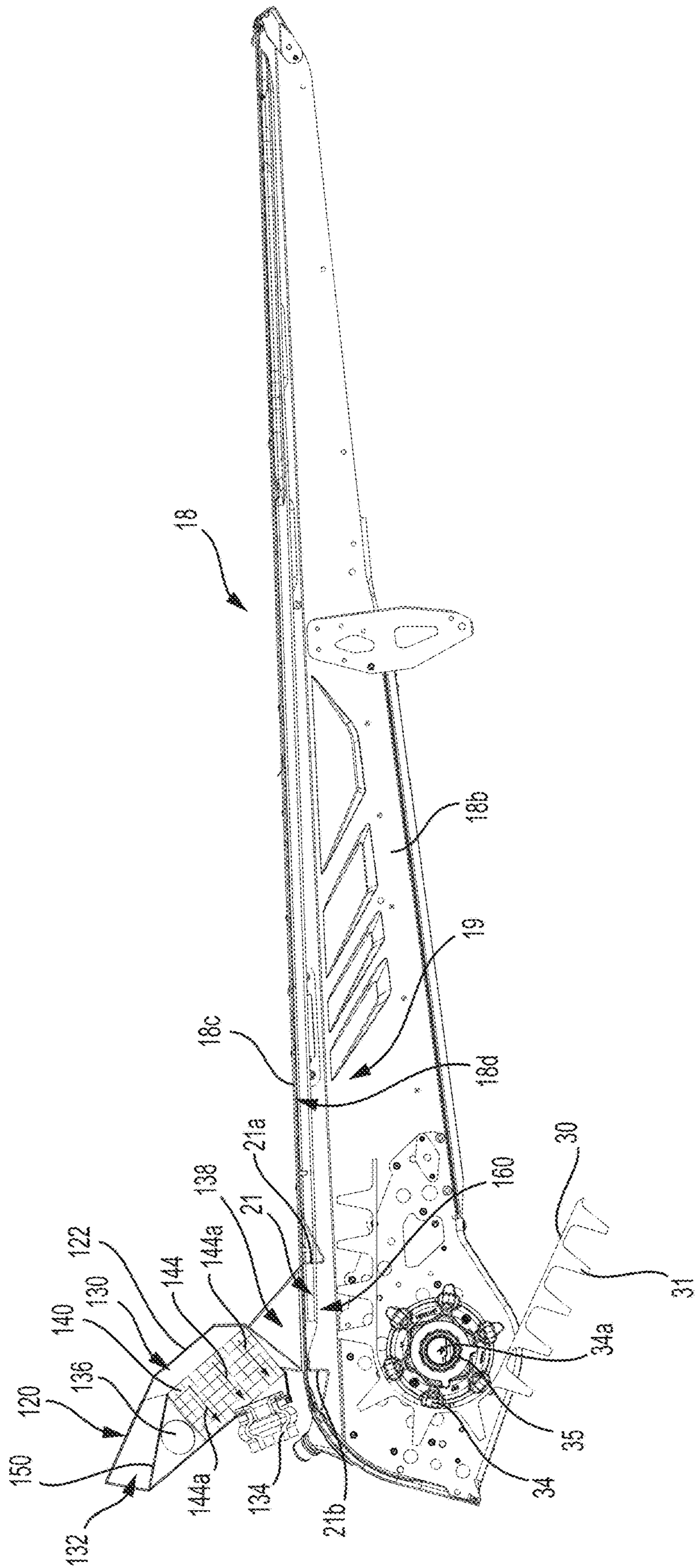


FIG. 8

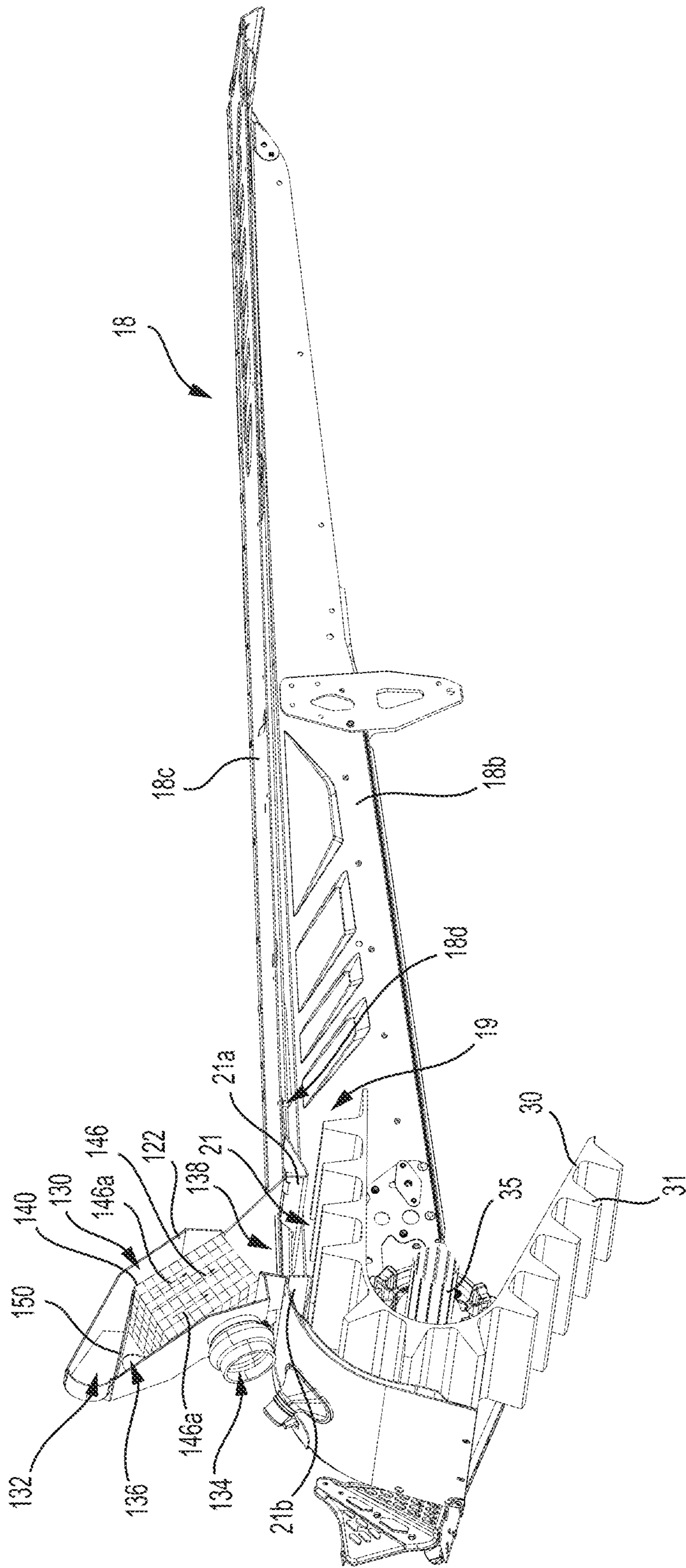


FIG. 9

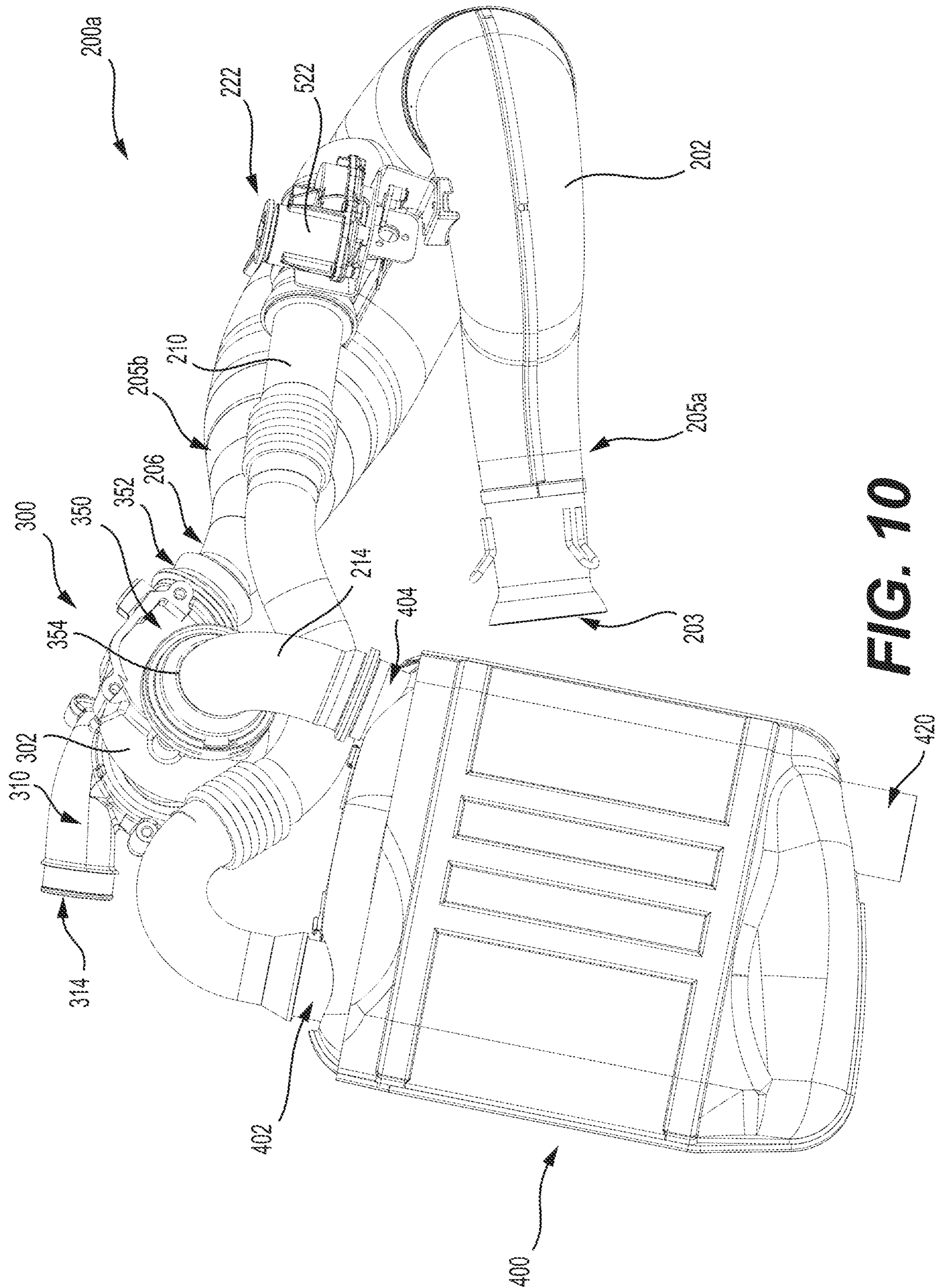


FIG. 10

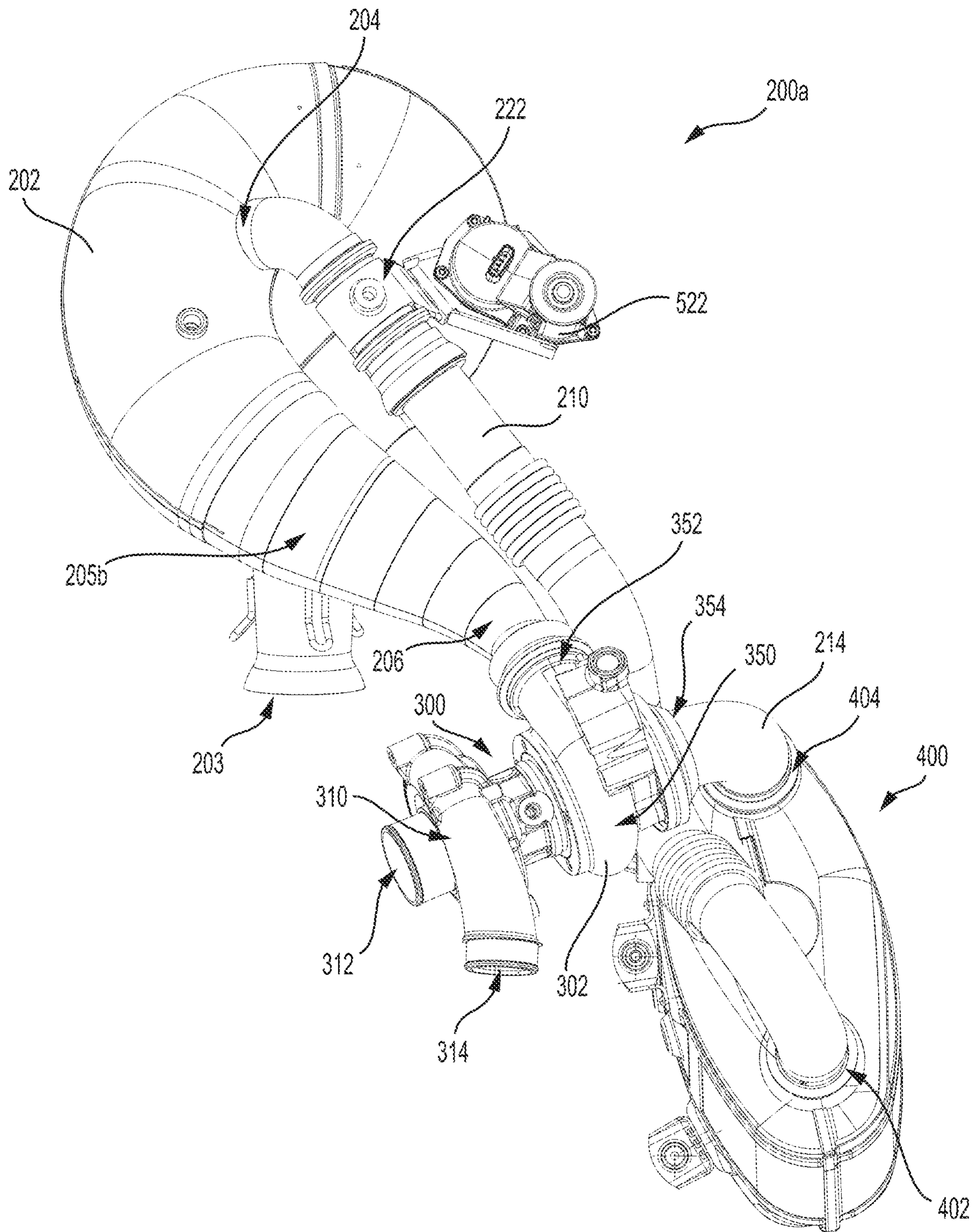


FIG. 11

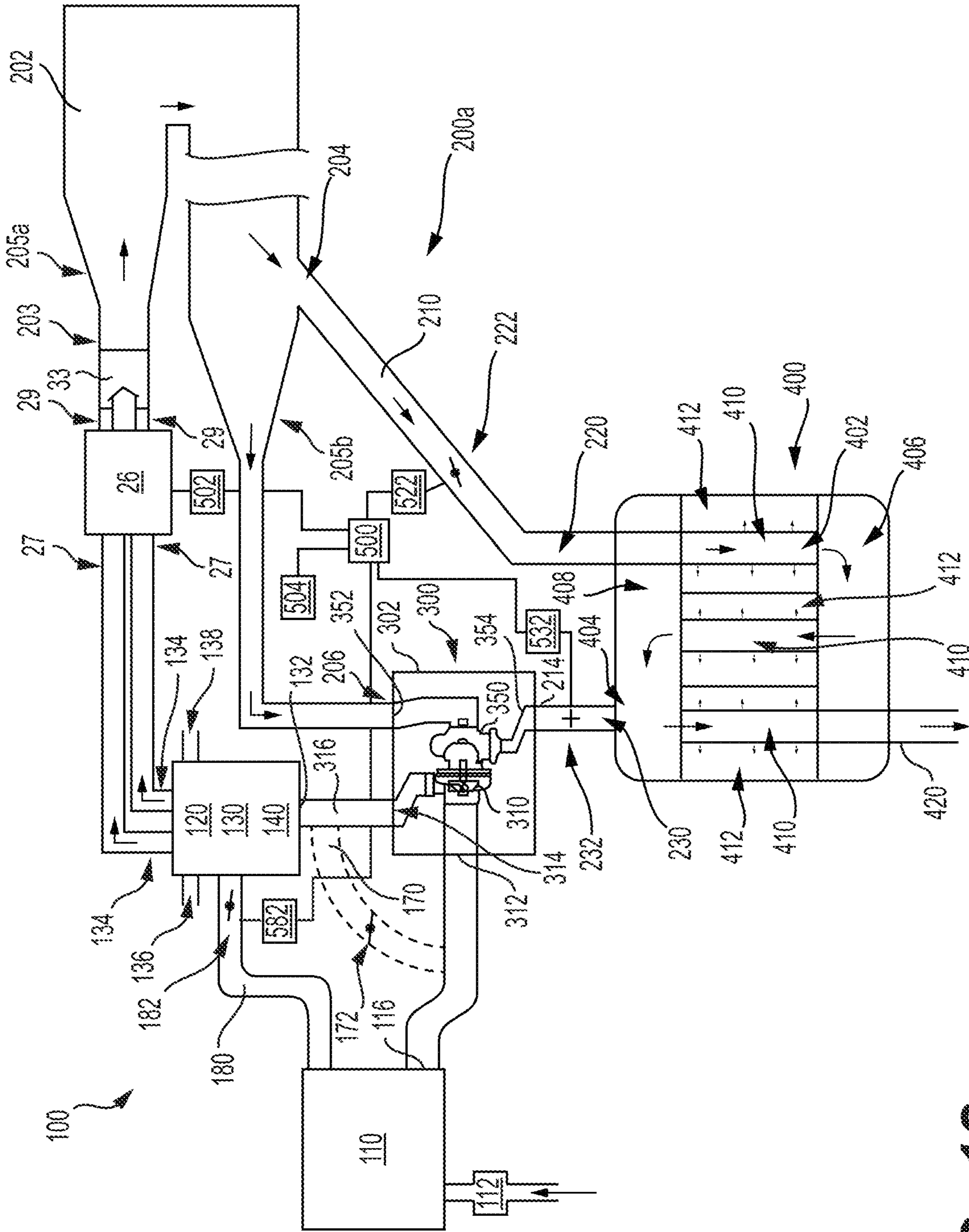


FIG. 12

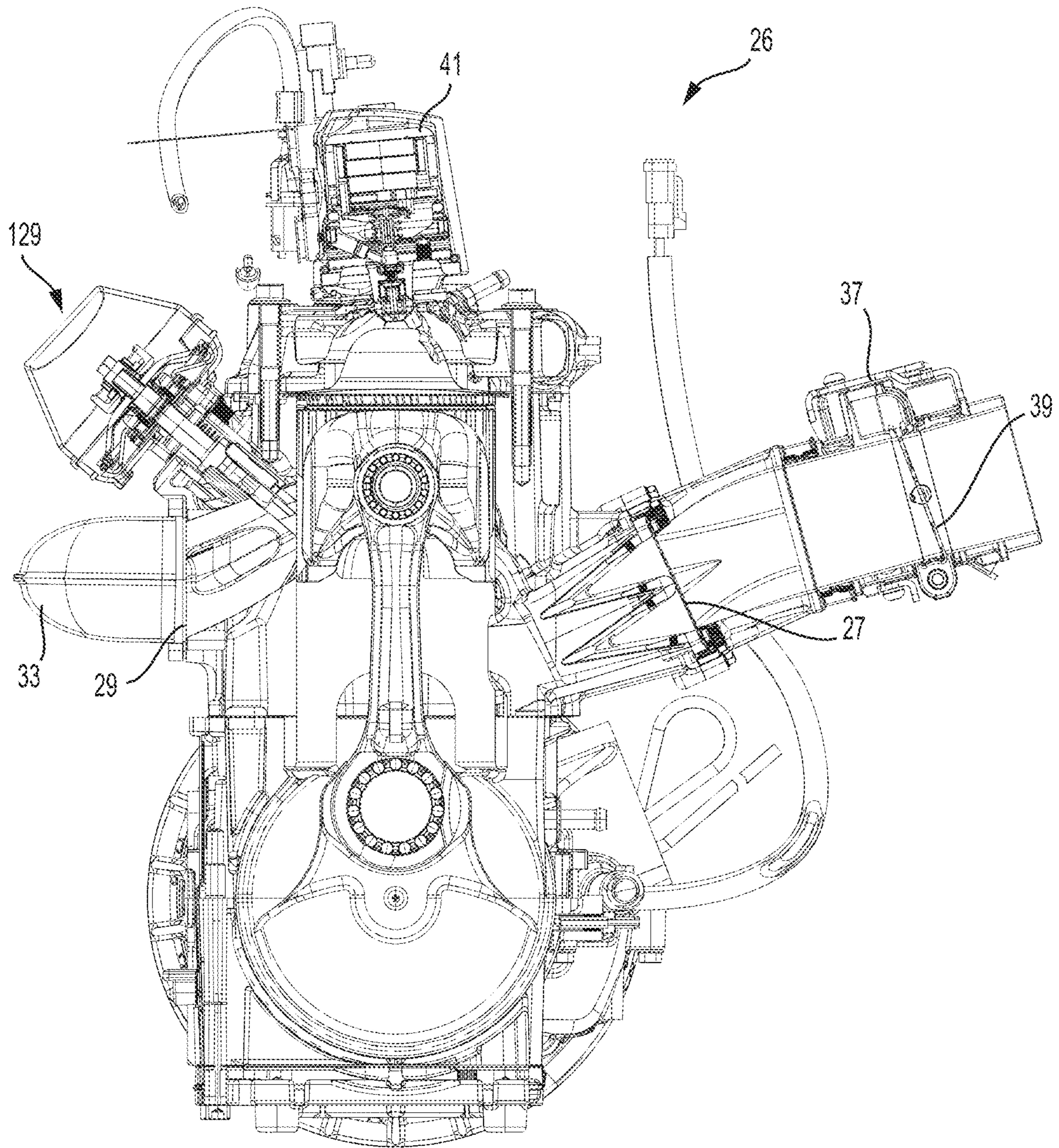


FIG. 13

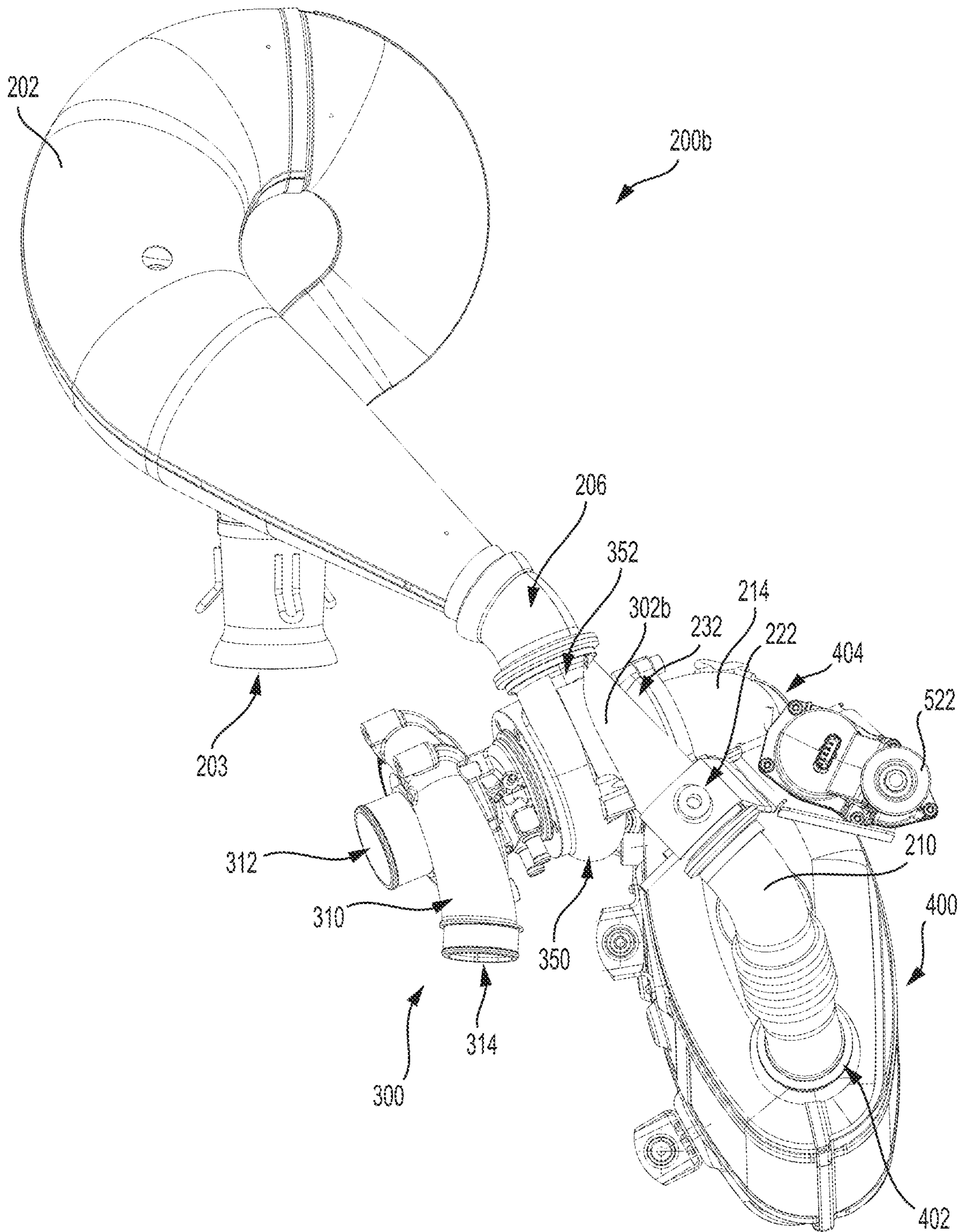


FIG. 14

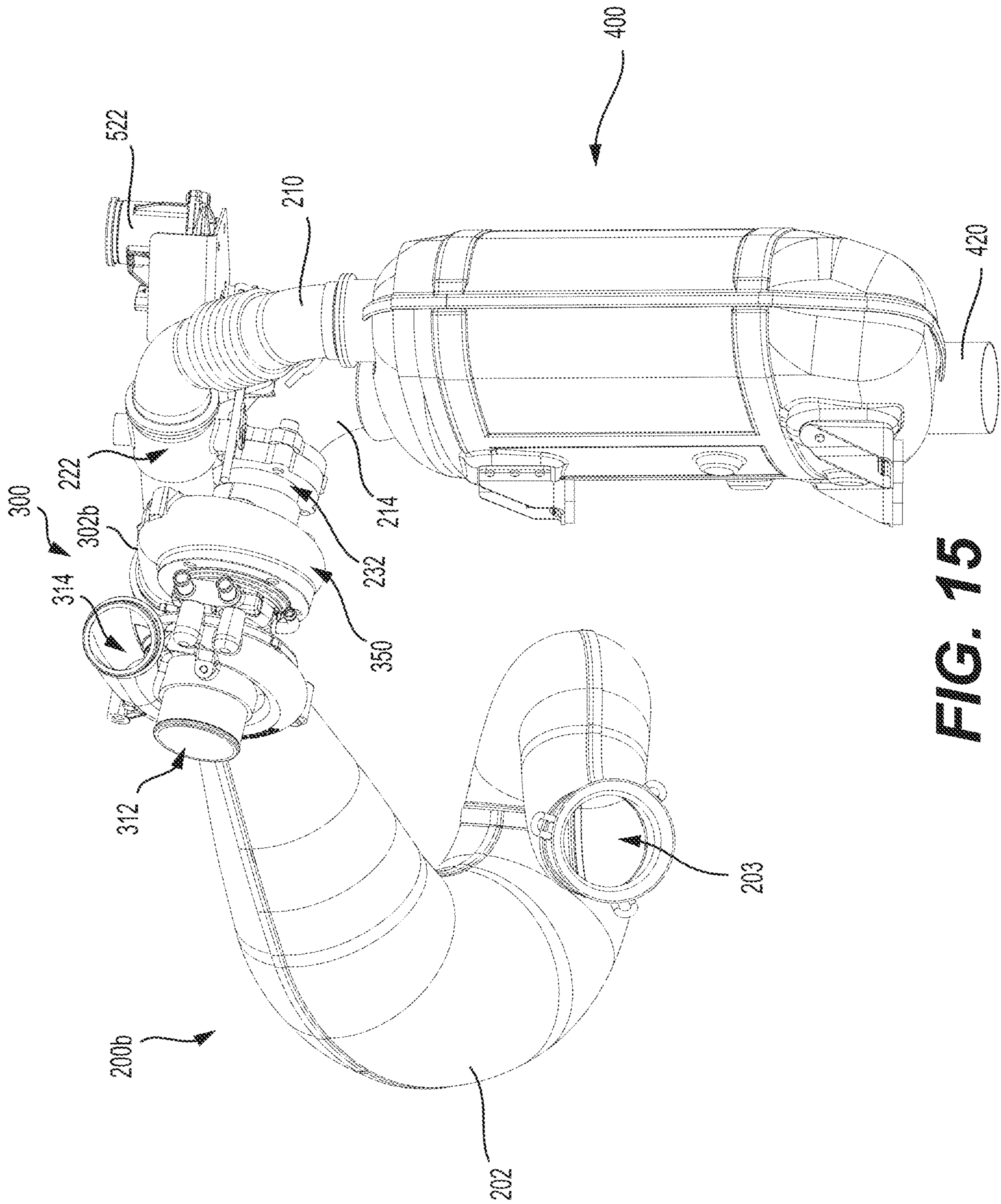


FIG. 15

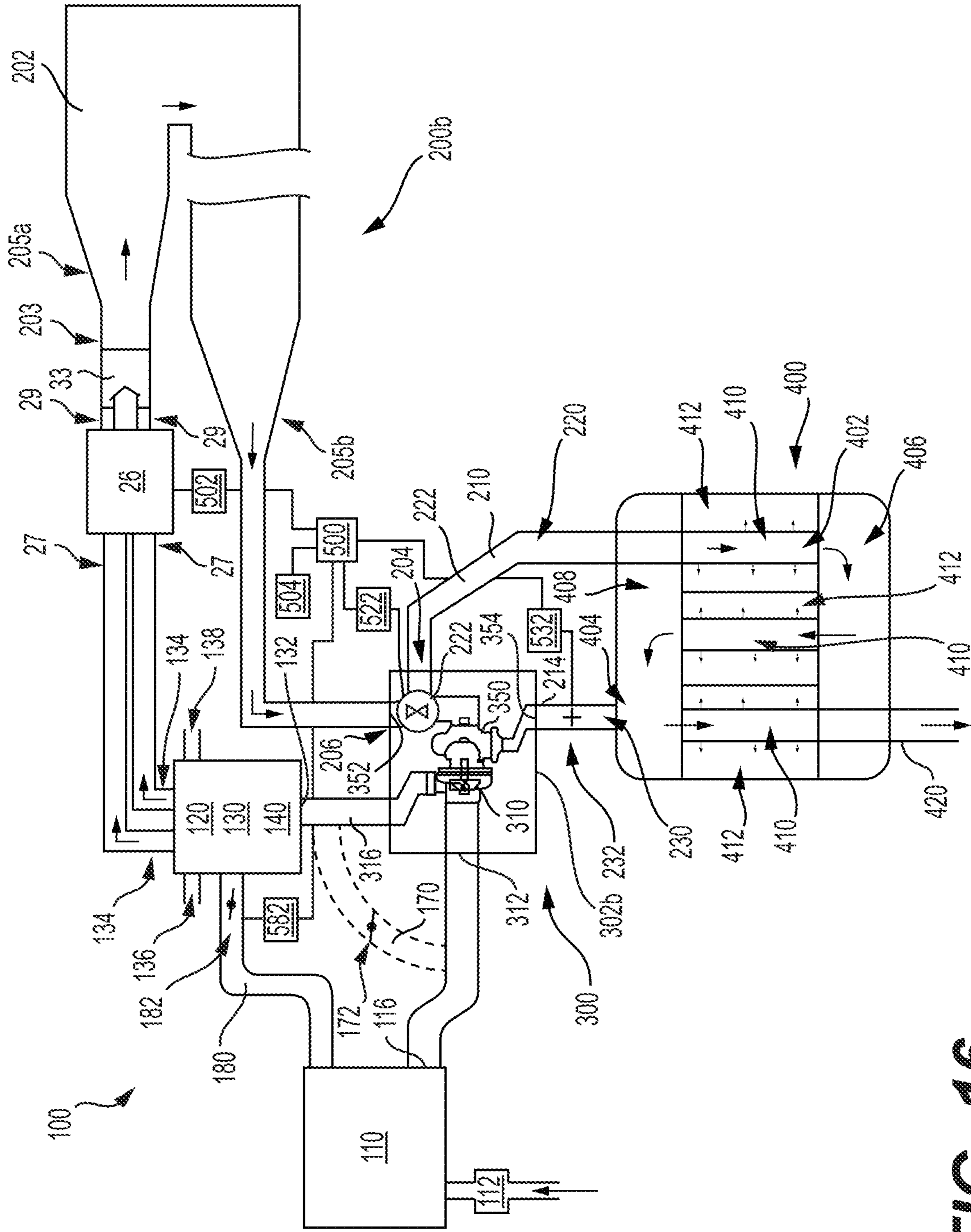


FIG. 16

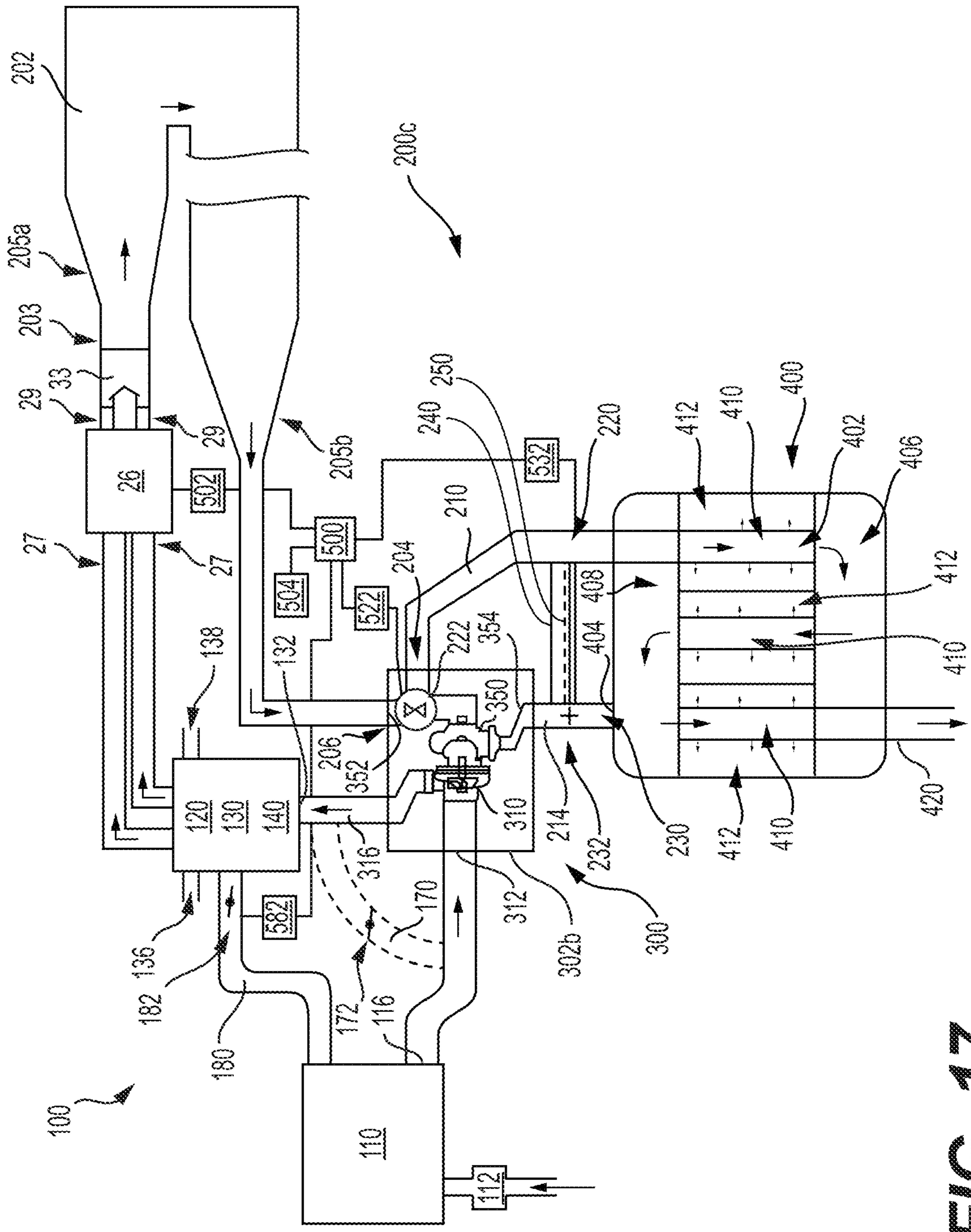


FIG. 17

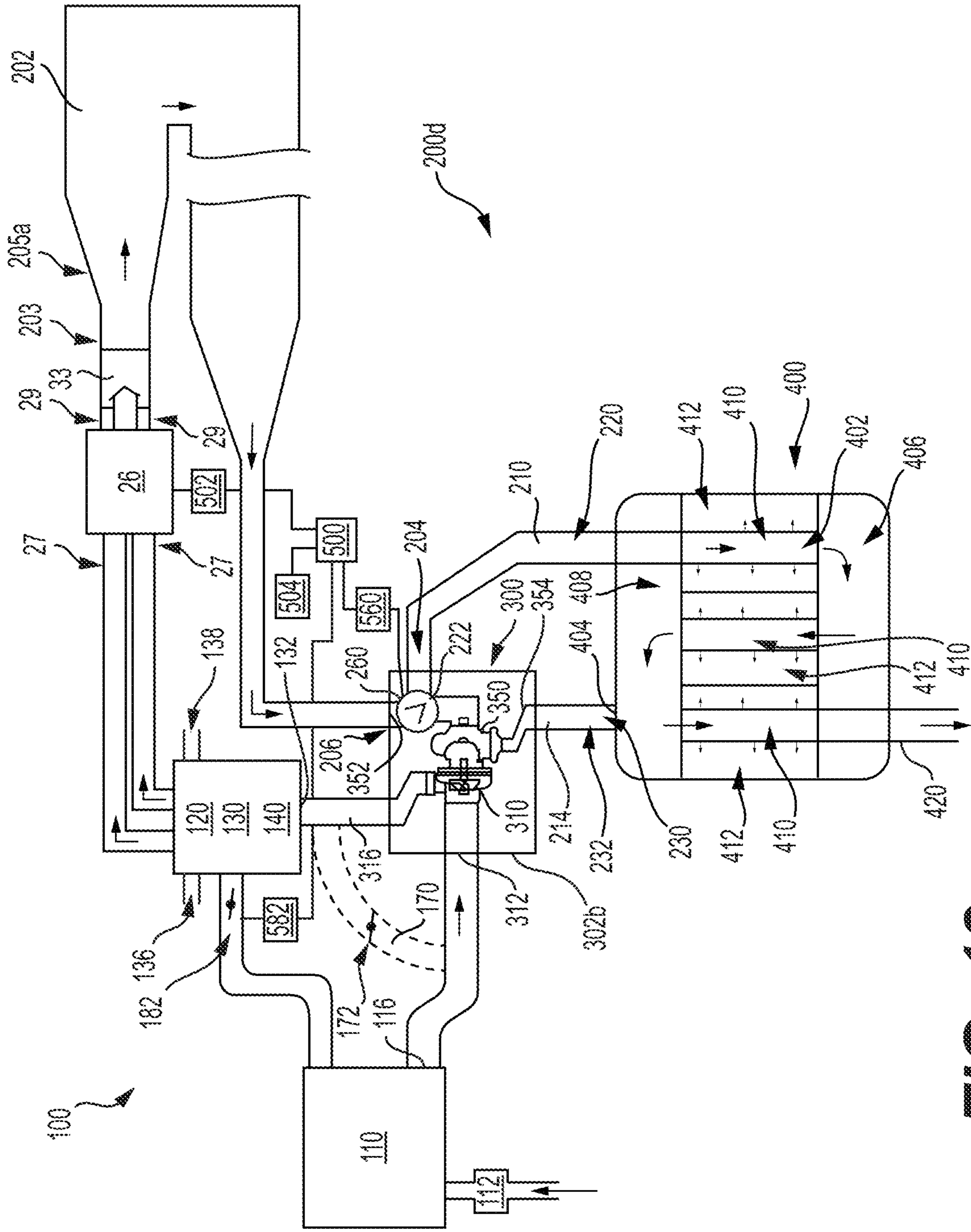


FIG. 18

AIR INTAKE AND EXHAUST SYSTEMS FOR A SNOWMOBILE ENGINE

CROSS-REFERENCE

The present application is a continuation application from U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/031,126, filed Jul. 10, 2018, which claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/530,553, entitled "Air Intake and Exhaust Systems for a Snowmobile Engine", filed Jul. 10, 2017, the entirety of each of which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE TECHNOLOGY

The present technology relates to air intake and exhaust systems for a snowmobile.

BACKGROUND

Design of air intake and exhaust systems are of importance for internal combustion engines. The efficiency of the combustion process in an internal combustion engine can be increased by decreasing the temperature of the air entering the engine for combustion. A decrease in air intake temperature provides a denser intake charge to the engine and allows more air and fuel to be combusted per engine cycle, increasing the output power of the engine. In addition, the efficiency of the combustion process can also be increased by compressing the air entering the engine for combustion. An increase in air intake pressure also provides a denser intake charge compared to the air from the atmosphere and allows more air and fuel to be combusted per engine cycle, and in turn increasing the output power of the engine. The compression of the air may be of particular importance when the internal combustion engine is operated in environments where atmospheric pressure is low or when the air gets thinner, such as when the engine is operated at high altitudes. The compression of the air can be performed using a turbocharger operated using the flow of exhaust gas of the engine. However, the efficiency and the performance of some engines may be hindered under certain circumstances by the presence of a turbocharger because of an increased amount of backpressure in their exhaust system.

There is thus a need for air intake systems capable of increasing air density before its entry into the engine for the combustion process, and for exhaust systems for internal combustion engines that are coupled to a turbocharger that could reduce an amount of backpressure under certain circumstances.

SUMMARY

It is an object of the present technology to ameliorate at least some of the inconveniences present in the prior art.

According to one aspect of the present technology, there is provided a snowmobile having a frame including a tunnel. The tunnel has a passage defined therethrough. The snowmobile further has at least one ski connected to the frame, an engine supported by the frame and having an engine air inlet, a rear suspension assembly operatively connected to the tunnel and a drive track supported by the rear suspension assembly and disposed at least in part below the tunnel. The drive track is operatively connected to the engine. The snowmobile further includes a heat exchanger connected to the tunnel. The heat exchanger includes a heat exchanger engine air inlet fluidly connected to atmosphere, a heat

exchanger engine air outlet fluidly connected between the heat exchanger engine air inlet and the engine air inlet, a cooling air inlet fluidly connected to the atmosphere, and a cooling air outlet fluidly connected between the cooling air inlet and the passage of the tunnel.

In some implementations, air flowing from the heat exchanger engine air inlet to the heat exchanger engine air outlet is cooled by air flowing from the cooling air inlet to the cooling air outlet.

In some implementations, the air flowing inside the heat exchanger from the heat exchanger engine air inlet to the heat exchanger engine air outlet is fluidly separate from the air flowing inside the heat exchanger from the cooling air inlet to the cooling air outlet.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes an intercooler disposed inside the heat exchanger. The intercooler defines a first path for air flowing from the cooling air inlet to the cooling air outlet, and the intercooler defines a second path for air flowing from the heat exchanger engine air inlet to the heat exchanger engine air outlet. The first path is fluidly separate from the second path, and the first path is in thermal communication with the second path.

In some implementations, the first path is perpendicular to the second path.

In some implementations, the tunnel comprises a left side portion and a right side portion, and the cooling air inlet and the cooling air outlet are disposed laterally between the left and right side portions.

In some implementations, the tunnel further includes a top portion connected between the left and right side portions, and the cooling air inlet and the cooling air outlet are disposed vertically higher than the top portion.

In some implementations, when the snowmobile is being propelled, rotation of the drive track creates a low pressure zone near the passage. The low pressure zone induces air to flow into the heat exchanger through the cooling air inlet, exit the heat exchanger through the cooling air outlet and to flow through the passage.

In some implementations, the passage is defined in the top portion, a protrusion is defined rearwardly of the passage on a bottom face of the top portion, and the low pressure zone is forward of the protrusion.

In some implementations, the heat exchanger is connected to a forward portion of the tunnel.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes a front axle operatively connected between the engine and the drive track, the passage being above the front axle and being longitudinally aligned with the front axle.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes an air compressor fluidly connected between the atmosphere and the heat exchanger engine air inlet to deliver compressed air to the engine via the heat exchanger.

In some implementations, the air compressor is part of a turbocharger. The engine has an engine exhaust outlet fluidly connected to the turbocharger; and a flow of exhaust gas flows out of the engine through the engine exhaust outlet for operating the turbocharger, and then to the atmosphere via the turbocharger.

In some implementations of the present technology, the heat exchanger is placed on the top portion of the tunnel of the snowmobile. The heat exchanger is in fluid communication with the passage defined therethrough. The heat exchanger favours the transfer of heat from the compressed air coming out of the air compressor to a flow of air from the atmosphere flowing from the cooling air inlet to the cooling air outlet. As such, the heat exchanger cools down the compressed air before entering the engine via the engine air

inlet. When the drive track of the snowmobile rotates below the passage, a zone of low pressure is formed near the passage and the air from the atmosphere is induced to flow through the heat exchanger from the cooling air inlet to the cooling air outlet. Using the rotation of the track for inducing the air from the atmosphere to flow through the heat exchanger may reduce the complexity of the snowmobile since no additional components, such as a fan, are required to induce the flow of the air through the heat exchanger.

According to another aspect of the present technology, there is provided a snowmobile including a frame, at least one ski connected to the frame, an engine supported by the frame. The engine has an engine air inlet and an engine exhaust outlet. The snowmobile further includes a pipe fluidly connected to the engine exhaust outlet for receiving a flow of exhaust gas from the engine, and the pipe further includes first and second pipe outlets. The snowmobile further has a muffler having a first muffler inlet, a second muffler inlet and a muffler outlet. A first exhaust flow path is defined from the first pipe outlet to the first muffler inlet, and a second exhaust flow path is defined from the second pipe outlet to the second muffler inlet. The snowmobile further includes a turbocharger fluidly connected along the second exhaust flow path between the second pipe outlet and the second muffler inlet, and a valve disposed between the pipe and the first muffler inlet for selectively controlling the flow of exhaust gas flowing through the first exhaust flow path.

In some implementations, the muffler includes first and second expansion chambers. The first muffler inlet is defined in the first expansion chamber. The second muffler inlet is defined in the second expansion chamber. Exhaust gas flowing along the first exhaust flow path flows in the first expansion chamber, then in the second expansion chamber, and then through the muffler outlet. The exhaust gas flowing along the second exhaust flow path flows in the second expansion chamber and then through the muffler outlet.

In some implementations, the turbocharger includes an air compressor fluidly connected to the engine air inlet; and the snowmobile further includes an air intake system fluidly connecting atmosphere to the engine. The air intake system includes the air compressor, a bypass conduit fluidly connected between the engine air inlet and a portion of the air intake system upstream of the air compressor for bypassing the air compressor, and a bypass valve selectively controlling a flow of air flowing in the bypass conduit.

In some implementations, the bypass valve selectively opens below a threshold operating condition of the engine.

In some implementations, the air intake system further includes a heat exchanger fluidly connected downstream from the air compressor for cooling compressed air delivered to the engine air inlet from the air compressor.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further has an intercooler disposed inside the heat exchanger.

In some implementations, the air intake system further includes a first chamber for receiving air from the atmosphere, and a second chamber fluidly connected between the first chamber and the air compressor.

In some implementations, the valve is a primary valve, and the snowmobile further includes a primary exhaust conduit fluidly connecting the first pipe outlet to the first muffler inlet and defining at least a portion of the first exhaust flow path. The primary valve is disposed in the primary exhaust conduit. The snowmobile further includes a secondary valve selectively controlling the flow of exhaust gas flowing through the second exhaust flow path.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further has a secondary exhaust conduit fluidly connecting the turbocharger to the second muffler inlet and defining at least a portion of the second exhaust flow path, and the secondary valve is disposed in the secondary exhaust conduit.

In some implementations, the secondary valve is open below a threshold atmospheric pressure.

In some implementations, the turbocharger has a housing, the valve is a primary valve, and the snowmobile further includes a primary exhaust conduit fluidly connecting the first pipe outlet to the first muffler inlet and defining at least a portion of the first exhaust flow path, the primary valve being disposed in the housing of the turbocharger, and a secondary valve selectively controlling the flow of exhaust gas flowing through the second exhaust flow path.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes a secondary exhaust conduit fluidly connecting the turbocharger to the second muffler inlet and defining at least a portion of the second exhaust flow path, and the secondary valve is disposed in the secondary exhaust conduit.

In some implementations, the secondary valve is open below a threshold atmospheric pressure.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes a secondary exhaust conduit fluidly connecting the turbocharger to the second muffler inlet and defining at least a portion of the second exhaust flow path, and a transfer conduit fluidly connecting the primary and secondary exhaust conduits. The transfer conduit is positioned downstream from the primary valve and upstream from the secondary valve.

In some implementations, one of the first and second exhaust flow paths extends from another one of the first and second exhaust flow paths, and the valve is an inverted valve that is movable for simultaneously controlling the flow of exhaust gas flowing through the first and second exhaust flow paths.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes a handlebar connected to the frame. The engine air inlet is forward of the handlebar.

In implementations of the present technology, the exhaust system has an exhaust pipe that has first and second pipe outlets. The exhaust system further has a muffler having first and second muffler inlets and a muffler outlet. Each pipe outlet defines the beginning of a respective exhaust flow path. The first exhaust flow path is defined from the first pipe outlet to the first muffler inlet, and the second exhaust flow path is defined from the second pipe outlet to the second muffler inlet. A turbocharger is fluidly connected along the second exhaust flow path between the second pipe outlet and the second muffler inlet. A valve is disposed between the pipe and the first muffler inlet for selectively controlling the flow of exhaust gas flowing through the first exhaust flow path.

By controlling the flow of exhaust gas through the first and/or second exhaust flow path, the engine can be operated as a naturally aspirated engine under certain circumstances and as a turbocharged engine under other circumstances. The control of the flow of exhaust gas through the first and second exhaust flow paths may further assist in reducing backpressure issues in the exhaust system. Different implementations of the exhaust system are contemplated.

According to yet another aspect of the present technology, there is provided a method for controlling a flow of exhaust gas from an engine. The method involves moving a valve to a first position such that exhaust gas flows sequentially from the engine to a pipe, a first exhaust flow path, a muffler and atmosphere, and further involves moving the valve to a

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second position such that exhaust gas flows sequentially from the engine to the pipe, a second exhaust flow path, the muffler and to the atmosphere, a turbine being disposed along the second exhaust flow path.

In some implementations, the valve is moved from the first position to the second position when the engine is operated above a threshold operating condition.

In some implementations, when the valve is in the first position, exhaust gas flowing in the first exhaust flow path has a first amount of backpressure, and when the valve is in the second position, exhaust gas flowing in the second exhaust flow path has a second amount of backpressure. The second amount of backpressure is less than the first amount of backpressure.

In some implementations, when the valve is in the first position, exhaust gas flows through a first number of expansion chambers of the muffler, and when the valve is in the second position, exhaust gas flows through a single expansion chamber of the muffler, or a second number of expansion chambers of the muffler. The second number is less than the first number.

In some implementations, the valve is a primary valve, and the method further includes selectively closing a secondary valve to close the second exhaust flow path.

In some implementations, the secondary valve is closed when the engine is operated below a threshold atmospheric pressure.

In some implementations, the method further includes selectively moving the primary and secondary valves such that exhaust gas flows from the first exhaust flow path to the second exhaust flow path.

According to yet another aspect of the present technology, there is provided a snowmobile including a frame; at least one ski connected to the frame; an engine supported by the frame, the engine having an engine air inlet and an exhaust outlet; a first airbox fluidly connected to the engine air inlet for providing intake air to the engine; an exhaust pipe fluidly connected to the exhaust outlet of the engine; a turbocharger fluidly connected to the exhaust pipe and the first airbox, the turbocharger including: an exhaust turbine, and a turbocharger housing housing the exhaust turbine; a second airbox fluidly connected to the turbocharger, the second airbox receiving air from atmosphere surrounding the snowmobile; an intake bypass conduit for bypassing the turbocharger, the intake bypass conduit being fluidly connected to the second airbox to the first airbox; an intake valve operatively connected to the intake bypass conduit for selectively controlling the flow of intake air from the second airbox to the first airbox; an exhaust bypass fluidly connected to the exhaust pipe; an exhaust valve operatively connected to the exhaust bypass conduit for selectively controlling the flow of exhaust gas through the turbocharger, the exhaust valve being selectively movable between at least a first position and a second position; and a muffler fluidly connected to the turbocharger and the exhaust bypass valve, in a first position of the intake valve, at least some of the intake air flowing from the second air box toward the turbocharger, in a second position of the intake valve, at least some of the intake air flowing from the second airbox toward the first airbox, in a first position of the exhaust valve, at least some of the exhaust gas flowing toward the turbocharger, in a second position of the exhaust valve, at least some of the exhaust gas flowing toward the muffler.

In some implementations, in the second position of the intake valve, the intake valve is open.

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In some implementations, the intake valve is selectively moved to the second position of the intake valve when the engine is operated above a threshold atmospheric pressure.

In some implementations, the turbocharger further includes an air compressor fluidly connected to the engine air inlet; and when the intake valve is in the first position of the intake valve, the air compressor receives air from the atmosphere via the second airbox.

In some implementations, when the turbocharger is not spooling: the intake valve is selectively moved to the second position of the intake valve; and the exhaust valve is selectively moved to the second position of the exhaust valve.

In some implementations, the exhaust valve is selectively moved to the second position of the exhaust valve when the engine is operated above a threshold atmospheric pressure.

In some implementations, the muffler includes a first muffler inlet, and a second muffler inlet; when the exhaust valve is in the first position of the exhaust valve, at least a majority of exhaust is directed toward the first muffler inlet; and when the exhaust valve is in the second position of the exhaust valve, at least a majority of exhaust is directed toward the second muffler inlet.

According to yet another aspect of the present technology, there is provided a snowmobile includes a frame; at least one ski connected to the frame; an engine supported by the frame, the engine having an engine air inlet and an exhaust outlet; a turbocharger fluidly connected to the exhaust outlet and the engine air inlet, the turbocharger including: an exhaust turbine, and a compressor; an air intake system including: a first flow path connecting the compressor to the atmosphere; a second flow path connecting the compressor to the engine air inlet; an intake bypass flow path connecting the atmosphere to the engine air inlet for at least partially bypassing the compressor; and an intake bypass valve for controlling the flow through the intake bypass flow path; and an exhaust system including a third flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the exhaust turbine; a fourth flow path connecting the exhaust turbine to the atmosphere; an exhaust bypass flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the atmosphere for at least partially bypassing the exhaust turbine; and an exhaust bypass valve for controlling the flow through the exhaust bypass flow path.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes a first airbox fluidly connected to the engine air inlet for providing intake air to the engine.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes a second airbox fluidly connected to the turbocharger.

In some implementations, the second airbox receives air from atmosphere surrounding the snowmobile, the first flow path passing through the second airbox.

In some implementations, a distance of air flow from the second airbox to the first airbox via the intake bypass is shorter than a distance of air flow from the second airbox to the first airbox via the compressor.

In some implementations, the first airbox includes: a first inlet receiving air flow from the compressor, and a second inlet receiving air flow from the second airbox; and the first inlet and the second inlet are distinct from each other.

In some implementations, the first air box includes two distinct air outlets; and the engine inlet is two distinct engine air inlets.

In some implementations, a distance between the intake bypass valve and the first airbox is less than a distance between the intake bypass valve and the second airbox.

In some implementations, the second airbox includes: a first outlet fluidly connected to the first airbox, and a second outlet fluidly connected to the turbocharger; and the first outlet and the second outlet are distinct from each other.

According to yet another aspect of the present technology, there is provided a snowmobile including a frame; at least one ski connected to the frame; an engine supported by the frame, the engine having an engine air inlet and an exhaust outlet; a turbocharger fluidly connected to the exhaust outlet and the engine air inlet, the turbocharger including: an exhaust turbine, and a compressor; a first flow path connecting the engine air inlet to the atmosphere, the first flow path passing through the compressor; a second flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the atmosphere, the second flow path passing through the exhaust turbine; an intake bypass flow path connecting the atmosphere to the engine air inlet for at least partially bypassing the compressor; an intake bypass valve for controlling the flow through the intake bypass flow path such that intake air can simultaneously flow through the first flow path and the intake bypass flow path from the atmosphere to the engine air inlet; an exhaust bypass flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the atmosphere for at least partially bypassing the exhaust turbine; and an exhaust bypass valve for controlling the flow through the exhaust bypass flow path such that exhaust can simultaneously flow through the second flow path and the exhaust bypass flow path between the exhaust outlet and the atmosphere.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes a first airbox fluidly connected to the engine air inlet for providing intake air to the engine.

In some implementations, the snowmobile further includes a second airbox fluidly connected to the turbocharger.

In some implementations, the second airbox receives air from atmosphere surrounding the snowmobile, the first flow path passing through the second airbox.

In some implementations, a distance of air flow from the second airbox to the first airbox via the intake bypass is shorter than a distance of air flow from the second airbox to the first airbox via the compressor.

In some implementations, the first airbox includes: a first inlet receiving air flow from the compressor, and a second inlet receiving air flow from the second airbox; and the first inlet and the second inlet are distinct from each other.

In some implementations, the first air box includes two distinct air outlets; and the engine inlet is two distinct engine air inlets.

In some implementations, a distance between the intake bypass valve and the first airbox is less than a distance between the intake bypass valve and the second airbox.

In some implementations, the second airbox includes: a first outlet fluidly connected to the first airbox, and a second outlet fluidly connected to the turbocharger; and the first outlet and the second outlet are distinct from each other.

For purposes of this application, terms related to spatial orientation such as forwardly, rearward, upwardly, downwardly, left, and right, are as they would normally be understood by a driver of the snowmobile sitting thereon in a normal riding position. Terms related to spatial orientation when describing or referring to components or sub-assemblies of the snowmobile, separately from the snowmobile, such as a heat exchanger for example, should be understood as they would be understood when these components or sub-assemblies are mounted to the snowmobile, unless specified otherwise in this application.

Implementations of the present technology each have at least one of the above-mentioned object and/or aspects, but do not necessarily have all of them. It should be understood that some aspects of the present technology that have resulted from attempting to attain the above-mentioned object may not satisfy this object and/or may satisfy other objects not specifically recited herein. The explanations provided above regarding the above terms take precedence over explanations of these terms that may be found in any one of the documents incorporated herein by reference.

Additional and/or alternative features, aspects and advantages of implementations of the present technology will become apparent from the following description, the accompanying drawings and the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the present technology, as well as other aspects and further features thereof, reference is made to the following description which is to be used in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, where:

FIG. 1 is a left side elevation view of a snowmobile, with a portion of a drive track represented;

FIG. 2 is a right side elevation view of a portion of the snowmobile of FIG. 1 showing a tunnel, an air intake system, and an exhaust system according to a first implementation;

FIG. 3 is a right side elevation view of the air intake system and the exhaust system of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view taken from a top, rear, right side of the air intake system and the exhaust system of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a perspective exploded view of the air intake system of FIG. 3;

FIG. 6 is a top plan view of the tunnel of FIG. 2, with a primary airbox of the air intake system;

FIG. 7 is a front elevation view of the tunnel and the primary airbox of FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view of the tunnel and the primary airbox of FIG. 6, taken along cross-section line 8-8 of FIG. 6, with a portion of the drive track represented;

FIG. 9 is a perspective view taken from a front, left side of the cross-section taken along cross-section line 9-9 of FIG. 6;

FIG. 10 is a right side elevation view of the exhaust system of FIG. 2;

FIG. 11 is a top plan view of the exhaust system of FIG. 10;

FIG. 12 is a schematic representation of the air intake system and the exhaust system of FIG. 3;

FIG. 13 is a cross-sectional view of the internal combustion engine of the snowmobile of FIG. 1;

FIG. 14 is a top plan view of a second implementation of the exhaust system of FIG. 10;

FIG. 15 is a rear elevation view of the exhaust system of FIG. 14;

FIG. 16 is a schematic representation of the air intake system of FIG. 3 and of the exhaust system of FIG. 14;

FIG. 17 is a schematic representation of the air intake system of FIG. 3, and of a third implementation of the exhaust system of FIG. 10; and

FIG. 18 is a schematic representation of the air intake system of FIG. 3, and of a fourth implementation of the exhaust system of FIG. 10.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

With reference to FIG. 1, a snowmobile 10 includes a forward end 12 and a rearward end 14. The snowmobile 10

includes a vehicle body in the form of a frame or chassis **16** which, as can be seen in FIG. 2, includes a tunnel **18**, an engine cradle portion **20**, a front suspension module **22** and an upper structure **24**.

An internal combustion engine **26** (schematically illustrated in FIG. 1) is carried in an engine compartment defined in part by the engine cradle portion **20** of the frame **16**. A fuel tank **28**, supported above the tunnel **18**, supplies fuel to the engine **26** for its operation. The engine **26** receives air from an air intake system **100** (FIGS. 2 and 3) that includes a heat exchanger **130** (FIGS. 8 and 9). Air flowing into the engine **26** is first cooled by circulating through the heat exchanger **130** as will be described in greater detail below.

An endless drive track **30** is positioned at the rear end **14** of the snowmobile **10**. The drive track **30** is disposed generally under the tunnel **18**, and is operatively connected to the engine **26** through a belt transmission system and a reduction drive. The endless drive track **30** is driven to run about a rear suspension assembly **32** operatively connected to the tunnel **18** for propulsion of the snowmobile **10**. The endless drive track **30** has a plurality of lugs **31** extending from an outer surface thereof to provide traction to the track **30**.

The rear suspension assembly **32** includes drive sprockets **34**, idler wheels **36** and a pair of slide rails **38** in sliding contact with the endless drive track **30**. The drive sprockets **34** are mounted on an axle **35** and define a sprocket axis **34a**. The axle **35** is operatively connected to a crankshaft (not shown) of the engine **26**. The slide rails **38** are attached to the tunnel **18** by front and rear suspension arms **40** and shock absorbers **42**. It is contemplated that the snowmobile **10** could be provided with a different implementation of a rear suspension assembly **32** than the one shown herein.

A straddle-type seat **60** is positioned atop the fuel tank **28**. A fuel tank filler opening covered by a cap **92** is disposed on the upper surface of the fuel tank **28** in front of the seat **60**. It is contemplated that the fuel tank filler opening could be disposed elsewhere on the fuel tank **28**. The seat **60** is adapted to accommodate a driver of the snowmobile **10**. The seat **60** could also be configured to accommodate a passenger. A footrest **64** is positioned on each side of the snowmobile **10** below the seat **60** to accommodate the driver's feet.

At the front end **12** of the snowmobile **10**, fairings **66** enclose the engine **26** and the belt transmission system, thereby providing an external shell that not only protects the engine **26** and the transmission system, but can also make the snowmobile **10** more aesthetically pleasing. The fairings **66** include a hood **68** and one or more side panels which can be opened to allow access to the engine **26** and the belt transmission system when this is required, for example, for inspection or maintenance of the engine **26** and/or the transmission system. A windshield **69** connected to the fairings **66** acts as a wind screen to lessen the force of the air on the rider while the snowmobile **10** is moving.

Two skis **70** positioned at the forward end **12** of the snowmobile **10** are attached to the front suspension module **22** of the frame **16** through a front suspension assembly **72**. The front suspension module **22** is connected to the front end of the engine cradle portion **20**. The front suspension assembly **72** includes ski legs **74**, supporting arms **76** and ball joints (not shown) for operatively connecting to the respective ski leg **74**, supporting arms **76** and a steering column **82** (schematically illustrated in FIG. 1).

A steering assembly **80**, including the steering column **82** and a handlebar **84**, is provided generally forward of the seat **60**. The steering column **82** is rotatably connected to the

frame **16**. The lower end of the steering column **82** is connected to the ski legs **74** via steering rods (not shown). The handlebar **84** is attached to the upper end of the steering column **82**. The handlebar **84** is positioned in front of the seat **60**. The handlebar **84** is used to rotate the steering column **82**, and thereby the skis **70**, in order to steer the snowmobile **10**. A throttle operator **86** in the form of a thumb-actuated throttle lever is mounted to the right side of the handlebar **84**. Other types of throttle operators, such as a finger-actuated throttle lever and a twist grip, are also contemplated. A brake actuator **88**, in the form of a hand brake lever, is provided on the left side of the handlebar **84** for braking the snowmobile **10** in a known manner. It is contemplated that the windshield **69** could be connected directly to the handlebar **84**. Engine air inlets **27** are forward of the handlebar **84**.

At the rear end of the snowmobile **10**, a snow flap **94** extends downward from the rear end of the tunnel **18**. The snow flap **94** protects against dirt and snow that can be projected upward from the drive track **30** when the snowmobile **10** is being propelled by the moving drive track **30**. It is contemplated that the snow flap **94** could be omitted.

The snowmobile **10** includes other components such as a display cluster, and the like. As it is believed that these components would be readily recognized by one of ordinary skill in the art, further explanation and description of these components will not be provided herein.

With reference to FIGS. 6 to 9, the tunnel **18** will now be described in more detail. The inverted U-shaped tunnel **18** has a left side portion **18a** and a right side portion **18b**. The footrests **64** are connected to the left and right side portions **18a**, **18b**. A top portion **18c** extends between the left and right side portions **18a**, **18b**. The left, right and top portions **18a**, **18b**, **18c** define a longitudinally extending space **19** therebetween. The upper portion of the drive track **30** is disposed at least partly in the space **19**. The drive sprockets **34** and the axle **35** are disposed in a forward portion of the space **19** enclosed by the forward portion of the tunnel **18**.

A passage **21** is defined in the top portion **18c** of the tunnel **18** in the form of a through hole. As can be seen in FIG. 8, the passage **21** is above the axle **35** and is longitudinally aligned with the axle **35**. A protrusion **21a** is defined rearwardly of the passage **21** on a bottom face **18d** of the top portion **18c**. Another protrusion **21b** is defined forwardly of the passage **21** on the bottom face **18d** of the top portion **18c**. In the present implementation, the protrusions **21a**, **21b** extend downwardly from the top portion **18c** and are defined by a portion of the sheet metal of the top portion **18c** of the tunnel **18**. In some implementations, the protrusions **21a**, **21b** could be separate components that are connected to the bottom face **18d** of the top portion **18c**. The protrusions **21a**, **21b** extend downwardly from the top portion **18c** of the tunnel **18** and above the drive track **30**, as can be seen in FIGS. 8 and 9. In some implementations, both protrusions **21a**, **21b** or only the protrusion **21b** could be omitted.

The engine **26** is an inline, two-cylinder, two-stroke, internal combustion engine. The two cylinders of the engine **26** are oriented with their cylindrical axes disposed vertically. It is contemplated that the engine **26** could be configured differently. For example, the engine **26** could have more or less than two cylinders, and the cylinders could be arranged in a V-configuration instead of in-line. It is contemplated that in some implementations the engine **26** could be a four-stroke internal combustion engine, a carbureted engine, or any other suitable engine capable of propelling the snowmobile **10**.

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Referring to FIGS. 12 and 13, the engine 26 receives air from the air intake system 100 via the engine air inlet 27 defined in the rear portion of each cylinder of the engine 26. Each air inlet 27 is connected to a throttle body 37 of the air intake system 100. The throttle body 37 comprises a throttle valve 39 which rotates to regulate the amount of air flowing through the throttle body 37 into the corresponding cylinder of the engine 26. A throttle valve actuator (not shown) is operatively connected to the throttle valve 39 to change the position of the throttle valve 39 and thereby adjust the opening of the throttle valve 39 with operation of the throttle lever 86 on the handlebar 84. It is also contemplated that the throttle valve actuator could be in the form of an electric motor. The electric motor could change the position of the throttle valve 39 based on input signals received from an electronic control module (not shown) which in turn receives inputs signals from a position sensor associated with the throttle lever 86 on the handlebars 84. Further details regarding such drive-by wire throttle systems can be found in International Patent Publication No. WO 2014/005130 A1, published on Jan. 3, 2014, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference. The air intake system 100 includes a heat exchanger 130 for cooling intake air as will be described in greater detail below.

The engine 26 receives fuel from the fuel tank 28 via injectors 41 having an opening in the cylinders. The fuel-air mixture in each of the left and right cylinders of the engine 26 is ignited by an ignition system (not shown). Engine output power, torque and engine speed are determined in part by the ignition timing, and also by various characteristics of the fuel-air mixture such as its composition, temperature, pressure and the like.

Exhaust gases resulting from the combustion events of the combustion process are expelled from the engine 26 via an exhaust system 200. An exhaust outlet 29 is defined in the front portion of each cylinder of the engine 26. The exhaust outlets 29 are fluidly connected to an exhaust manifold 33. The exhaust system 200 includes an exhaust pipe 202 which is connected to the exhaust manifold 33 and extends forwardly therefrom to direct the exhaust gases out of the engine 26. The exhaust system 200 will be described in greater detail below.

A turbocharger 300 is operatively connected to the engine 26. The turbocharger 300 has a housing 302 including an air compressor 310 and an exhaust turbine 350. The air compressor 310 includes a compressor turbine and is part of the air intake system 100. Intake air flowing past the rotating compressor turbine is compressed thereby. The rotation of the compressor turbine is powered by the exhaust turbine 350, which is in turn rotated by exhaust gases expelled from the engine 26 and being directed to flow over the blades of the exhaust turbine 350. It is contemplated that, in some implementations, the air compressor 310 could be a supercharger, in which the compressor turbine would be directly powered by the engine 26.

With reference to FIGS. 2 to 9, the air intake system 100 will be described. Air from the atmosphere flows through side apertures 113 defined in an upper portion 25 of the upper structure 24 of the chassis 16. Screens 114 connected to the upper portion 25 may assist in preventing debris, dust particles, snow and/or water to enter the side apertures 113. The air then flows through a secondary airbox 110 through an inlet 112 defined in the front portion of the snowmobile 10. The inlet 112 is defined in the upper portion 25 of the upper structure 24. Screens and/or filters may be connected to the inlet 112 of the secondary airbox 110. The secondary airbox 110 is disposed above the front suspension module

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22. An outlet 116 is defined in the middle portion on the right side of the secondary airbox 110. The outlet 116 is fluidly connected to an inlet 312 of the air compressor 310 disposed on the right side of the engine 26. It is contemplated that the secondary airbox 110 could be omitted and that air from the atmosphere could directly enter into the inlet 312 without going through the secondary airbox 110.

When the air from the atmosphere is compressed by the air compressor 310, the air warms up because of the friction between the air molecules and because of the increase of pressure. In addition, when the exhaust gas flows through the exhaust turbine 350, some of the heat of the exhaust gas heats up the housing 302, which in turn transfers some of that heat to the air being compressed in the air compressor 310, warming up the compressed air even more. The compressed air then flows out of the air compressor 310 through an outlet 314, into a conduit 316 and into a primary air box 120. The secondary airbox 110 defines a first chamber of the air intake system 100, and the primary airbox 120 defines a second chamber of the air intake system 100. In some implementations, the chambers defined by the secondary airbox 110 and the primary airbox 120 act as resonators lowering the noise exiting through the air intake system 100.

As best seen in FIGS. 6 and 7, the primary air box 120 is connected to a forward portion of the tunnel 18 on the top portion 18c thereof. The primary air box 120 is fastened to the tunnel 18, but it is contemplated that it could be connected thereto otherwise. It is also contemplated that the primary air box 120 could be connected to another portion of the snowmobile 10, instead of the tunnel 18. The primary air box 120 is a heat exchanger 130 (FIGS. 8 and 9). The heat exchanger 130 has a heat exchanger engine air inlet 132 fluidly connected to the conduit 316, two heat exchanger engine air outlets 134 fluidly connected to each engine air inlet 27, two cooling air inlets 136 for receiving air from the atmosphere, and a cooling air outlet 138 fluidly connected between the cooling air inlet 136 and the passage 21 defined in the tunnel 18. As best seen in FIGS. 6 to 9, the cooling air inlets 136 and the cooling air outlet 138 are disposed laterally between the left and right side portions 18a, 18b of the tunnel 18. In addition, the cooling air inlets 136 and the cooling air outlet 138 are disposed vertically higher than the top portion 18c of the tunnel 18. It is contemplated that the cooling air inlets 136 and the cooling air outlet 138 could be positioned otherwise.

Referring to FIGS. 8 and 9, the heat exchanger 130 includes an intercooler 140. The intercooler 140 is made of extruded metal, but it is contemplated that it could be made otherwise. The intercooler 140 defines paths 144 (FIG. 8), 146 (FIG. 9) separate from each other, each one being schematically represented by an arrow. The path 144 includes a plurality of channels 144a fluidly connecting the heat exchanger engine air inlet 132 to the heat exchanger engine air outlets 134, each one being schematically represented by an arrow. The channels 144a extend generally longitudinally with respect to the primary air box 120. The primary air box 120 further includes a baffle 150 extending above the intercooler 140 for separating the paths 144, 146. The baffle 150 directs the air entering the primary air box 120 through the heat exchanger engine air inlet 132 toward a rear wall 122 thereof. Since the paths 144, 146 are separate from each other, the air flowing from the heat exchanger engine air inlet 132 to the heat exchanger engine air outlets 134, and the air flowing from the cooling air inlets 136 to the cooling air outlet 138 do not mix. In some implementations, it is contemplated that the two paths 144, 146 could be in

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fluid communication and could allow for the air flowing through the intercooler 140 to mix at least partially.

The path 146 includes a plurality of channels 146a (FIG. 9) fluidly connecting the cooling air inlets 136 to the cooling air outlet 138, each one being schematically represented by an arrow. The channels 146a extend generally vertically and parallel to the rear wall 122 of the primary airbox 120. As such, the path 144 is perpendicular to the path 146. The paths 144, 146 are in thermal communication, which means that when the compressed air flows through the path 144, some of its heat is transferred to the air flowing through the path 146 via the heat exchanger 130. The air flowing through the cooling air inlets 136 and through the path 146 is air from the atmosphere and is cooler than the compressed air flowing through the path 144. It is contemplated that the air flowing through the path 146 could be, in some implementations, air from the atmosphere contained within the body of the snowmobile 10 or the engine compartment thereof. As such, the compressed air flowing from the heat exchanger engine air inlet 132 to the heat exchanger engine air outlets 134 is cooled by the air flowing from the cooling air inlets 136 to the cooling air outlet 138. In other words, as air from the atmosphere flows along the path 146, it is heated up by the heat exchanger 130 that assists in transferring some of the heat from the compressed air flowing through the path 144 to the air from the atmosphere flowing through the path 146. As a result, the compressed air flowing through the heat exchanger engine air outlets 134 is cooler than the compressed air flowing through the heat exchanger engine air inlet 132, and provides for a denser intake charge for the engine 26.

As will be described with reference with FIGS. 8 and 9, the passage 21 defined in the top portion 18c of the tunnel 18 further assists in cooling the compressed air flowing through the passage 144. When the snowmobile 10 is being propelled, the drive track 30 is rotating inside the space 19 of the tunnel 18. Rotation of the drive track 30, and of the lugs 31 extending therefrom, creates a low pressure zone 160 near the passage 21. The low pressure zone 160 is understood to be a zone near the passage 21 having a pressure that is lower than the atmospheric pressure. The decrease of atmospheric pressure within the low pressure zone 160 is caused by the rotation of the drive track 30 when the snowmobile 10 is propelled forwardly. As such, when the drive track 30 propels the snowmobile 10 forwards, the lugs 31 have an effect similar to that of the blades of a fan, in that the lugs 31 move the air near or within the passage 21 forwardly therefrom, and thus locally decreasing the air pressure. In addition, the protrusion 21a has a venturi-like effect and breaks the boundary layer of the air flowing between bottom face 18d of the tunnel 18 and the drive track 30 and causes turbulent flow of the air forward of the protrusion 21a and within the passage 21. As a result, the low pressure zone 160 is forward of the protrusion 21a and at least partially rearward of the protrusion 21b.

When the low pressure zone 160 is formed, air from the atmosphere is induced to flow into the heat exchanger 130 through the cooling air inlets 136, through the intercooler 140 through the path 146, through the cooling air outlet 138 and into the passage 21. As such, the efficiency of the heat exchanger 130 is increased when the snowmobile 10 is being propelled since more heat can be transferred from the air flowing through the path 144 to the air flowing through the path 146 as air from the atmosphere is induced to flow through the path 146.

Referring to FIG. 12, other components of the air intake system 100 will be described. A blow-off conduit 170 having

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a blow-off valve 172 is fluidly connected between the secondary airbox 110 and the primary airbox 120. The blow-off valve 172 is open under certain circumstances, such as when the compressed air exiting the outlet 314 has a pressure that is above a predetermined pressure threshold. For example, in situations where the air compressor 310 is operated and the throttle valve 39 is closed, the air compressor 310 has to spool down and the blow-off valve 172 opens to release the excess pressure. The air intake system 100 further includes a bypass conduit 180 (FIG. 12) fluidly connecting the secondary airbox 110 to the primary airbox 120. The bypass conduit 180 is thus fluidly connected between the engine air inlets 27 and the secondary airbox 110, which is positioned upstream of the air compressor 350. Air flowing through the bypass conduit 180 flows through the path 144, i.e. the air flows through the heat exchanger engine air inlet 132, is cooled by the intercooler 140, flows through the heat exchanger engine air outlets 134, and flows to the engine air inlets 27. As such, the bypass conduit 180 allows air from the atmosphere to bypass the air compressor 310 when the snowmobile 10 is ridden on a terrain having an altitude near sea level and/or under certain circumstances which will be described in more detail below. A bypass valve 182 selectively controls a flow of air flowing through the bypass conduit 180. The bypass valve 182 is open when the turbocharger 300 is not operating. It is contemplated that the bypass valve 182 could also open when the engine 26 is operated below a threshold operating condition that could be, for example, a threshold engine speed, or when the engine 26 is operated at idle.

Referring to FIGS. 10 to 12, a first implementation 200a of the exhaust system 200 will be described. The exhaust gas expelled from the engine 26 flows through the exhaust outlets 29 and into the exhaust pipe 202. As best seen in FIG. 11, the exhaust pipe 202 is curved and has a varying diameter along its length and is typically referred to as a tuned pipe. Other types of exhaust pipes 202 are contemplated. The pipe 202 includes a pipe inlet 203 fluidly connected to the exhaust manifold 33, a pipe outlet 204 located in a middle portion of the pipe 202, and a pipe outlet 206 located at the end of the pipe 202. The pipe 202 further has a divergent portion 205a adjacent to the pipe inlet 203, and a convergent portion 205b adjacent the pipe outlet 206. The pipe outlet 204 is positioned upstream from the convergent portion 205b. The pipe outlet 206 is positioned downstream from the convergent portion 205b.

The exhaust turbine 350 is connected to the exhaust system 200a for operating the air compressor 310. The exhaust turbine 350 includes an exhaust gas inlet 352 fluidly connected to the pipe outlet 206 for receiving the exhaust gas from the exhaust pipe 202. The exhaust turbine 350 further includes an exhaust gas outlet 354 connected to a muffler 400. The exhaust gas then flows through the muffler 400 into the atmosphere via a muffler outlet 420. As best seen in FIGS. 10 and 12, the muffler 400 has a muffler inlet 402, a muffler inlet 404, an expansion chamber 406 and an expansion chamber 408. A series of conduits 410 extend between the expansion chambers 406, 408. For clarity, only one of the conduits 410 fluidly connects the expansion chambers 406, 408, but it is contemplated that a plurality of conduits 410 could fluidly connect the expansion chambers 406, 408. In some implementations, there could be more than the two expansion chambers 406, 408 in the muffler 400 and the conduits 410 could fluidly connect them. The conduits 410 extend in expansion chambers 412 defined between the chambers 406, 408. The conduits 410 have through holes defined therein, and the expansion chambers

412 include sound-absorbing materials to further muffle the acoustic wave caused by the flow of the exhaust gas schematically shown by arrows in FIG. 12. In some implementations, the expansion chambers 406, 408 could include a series of baffles in order to further muffle the acoustic wave caused by the flow of the exhaust gas flowing through the muffler 400. The muffler inlet 402 is defined in the expansion chamber 406 at the end of one of the conduits 410 that is fluidly connected to the primary exhaust conduit 210. The muffler inlet 404 is defined in the expansion chamber 408 and is fluidly connected to the secondary exhaust conduit 214. The muffler outlet 420 is defined on the bottom of the muffler 400 at the end of one of the conduits 410.

Still referring to FIGS. 10 to 12, a primary exhaust conduit 210 fluidly connects the pipe outlet 204 to the muffler inlet 402, and defines at least a portion of an exhaust flow path 220. The exhaust flow path 220 extends from the pipe outlet 204 to the muffler inlet 402. A primary valve 222 is disposed in the primary exhaust conduit 210. The primary valve 222 selectively controls the flow of exhaust gas flowing through the exhaust flow path 220. When the primary valve 222 is open, the exhaust gas flowing through the exhaust flow path 220 flows in the primary exhaust conduit 210, through one of the conduits 410, through the muffler inlet 402 into the expansion chamber 406, then into the expansion chamber 408 through the conduits 410, then through the muffler outlet 420 and to the atmosphere, as schematically shown by the arrows in FIG. 12. When the exhaust gas flows through the exhaust flow path 220, the muffler 400 reduces the noise emitted by the engine 26 and/or the exhaust gas flowing to the atmosphere since the exhaust gas flows through the expansion chamber 406, the conduits 410 and the chambers 412, and the expansion chamber 408 before flowing to the atmosphere.

A secondary exhaust conduit 214 fluidly connects the exhaust gas outlet 354 of the exhaust turbine 350 to the muffler inlet 404, and defines at least a portion of an exhaust flow path 230. The exhaust flow path 230 extends from the pipe outlet 206 to the muffler inlet 404. The exhaust turbine 350 is thus fluidly connected along the exhaust flow path 230 between the pipe outlet 206 and the muffler inlet 404. A secondary valve 232 is disposed in the secondary exhaust conduit 214 (FIG. 12). The secondary valve 232 selectively controls the flow of exhaust gas flowing through the exhaust flow path 230.

Referring to FIG. 12, when the secondary valve 232 is open, the exhaust flow path 230 defines a more direct flow path from the exhaust pipe 202 than the exhaust flow path 220 since the exhaust gas avoids flowing through the expansion chamber 406 and the plurality of conduits 410. Instead, the exhaust gas flows through the muffler inlet 404 into the expansion chamber 408, and then through one of the conduits 410 and on to the atmosphere through the muffler outlet 420. In this respect and as can be seen in FIGS. 10 and 12, the secondary exhaust conduit 214 and the muffler outlet 420 are nearly coaxial with one another, which facilitates the flow of the exhaust gas from the exhaust flow path 230 to the atmosphere. Allowing the exhaust gas to flow through the exhaust flow path 230 may assist in reducing an amount of backpressure appearing in the exhaust system 200a compared to a situation where the exhaust gas flows through the exhaust flow path 220. Backpressure is understood to be the resistance to the flow of the exhaust gas between the engine 26 and the muffler outlet 420 due, at least in part, to twists, bends, obstacles, turns and right angles present in the various components of the exhaust system 200. In present technology, reducing backpressure can assist in optimizing

performance of the engine 26, as high backpressure can negatively impact the efficiency of the engine performance. Reducing the amount of backpressure in the exhaust system 200a may also have the effect of reducing what is known as “turbo lag”, which is a delay in the response of a turbo-charged engine after the throttle lever 86 has been moved for operating the throttle system.

Furthermore, under certain conditions, when the exhaust gas flows through the exhaust flow path 230, the muffler 400 reduces the noise emitted by the engine 26 and/or the exhaust gas flowing to the atmosphere, but to a lesser extent than when the exhaust gas flows through the exhaust flow path 220 since the exhaust gas flows only through the expansion chamber 408 and one of the chambers 412 before flowing to the atmosphere.

An illustrative scenario of the operation of the snowmobile 10 having the air intake system 100 and the exhaust system 200a is described below with reference to FIG. 12. It is to be noted that the components schematically shown in FIG. 12 are not to scale and could be configured otherwise than what is presented herein. The following scenario, and the further description of different implementations of the exhaust system 200, describe how the flow of exhaust gas from the engine 26 can be controlled using the exhaust system 200.

Referring to FIG. 12, air from the atmosphere enters the secondary airbox 110 through the inlet 112 as described above. When the atmospheric pressure is above a threshold atmospheric pressure, such as 1 Bar, which could be the case when the snowmobile 10 is ridden on a terrain nearly at sea level for example, the bypass valve 182 is open. Thus, the air from the atmosphere flows from the secondary airbox 110 to the primary airbox 120 through the bypass conduit 180, and thus bypasses the air compressor 310. The air flows through the primary airbox 120, through the path 144 defined in the intercooler 140, through the heat exchanger engine air outlets 134 and on to the engine air inlets 27. Combustion events occur in the engine 26 and the exhaust gas resulting from the combustion events is expelled through the engine exhaust outlets 29 in the exhaust pipe 202.

In this scenario, the bypass valve 182 and the primary valve 222 are open, and the secondary valve 232 is closed. The exhaust gas flows through the exhaust flow path 220 to the expansion chamber 406, the conduits 410 and chambers 412, the expansion chamber 408, the muffler outlet 420 and to the atmosphere. Since the secondary valve 232 is closed, the exhaust turbine 350 is prevented from spooling as the exhaust gas cannot flow through the exhaust flow path 230. The air compressor 310 is also prevented from spooling and the engine 62 is thus operated as a naturally aspirated engine. As such, when the primary valve 222 is open and the secondary valve 232 is closed, the exhaust gas flows sequentially from the engine 26 to the exhaust pipe 202, through the exhaust flow path 220, the expansion chambers 406, 408 of the muffler 400 and on to the atmosphere.

When the atmospheric pressure is below the threshold atmospheric pressure, such as when the snowmobile 10 is ridden on terrains having a high altitude for example, the bypass valve 182 is closed, the primary valve 222 is closed and the secondary valve 232 is open. Air from the atmosphere enters the secondary airbox 110 through the inlet 112, flows through the outlet 116 and enters the air compressor 310 through the inlet 312. The air is compressed by the air compressor 310 and is heated up because of the compression. The compressed air then flows through the outlet 314 into the conduit 316 and through the heat exchanger engine air inlet 132. The compressed air flows in the heat exchanger

130 through the path 144 and is cooled by the air flowing through the path 146 in the intercooler 140. The cooled compressed air flows through the heat exchanger engine air outlets 134 and on to the engine air inlets 27. Combustion events occur in the engine 26 and the exhaust gas resulting from the combustion events are expelled through the engine exhaust outlets 29 in the exhaust pipe 202. The exhaust gas flows through the pipe outlet 206, and through the exhaust flow path 230. Thus, the exhaust gas flows through the exhaust turbine inlet 352 and makes the exhaust turbine 350 spool. The housing 302 of the turbocharger 300 is heated up as the exhaust gas flows past the exhaust turbine 350, as described above. The exhaust gas flows through the exhaust turbine outlet 354 into the secondary exhaust conduit 214 and along the exhaust flow path 230. The exhaust gas flows through the exhaust flow path 230 until the muffler inlet 404, enters the expansion chamber 408 and is expelled to the atmosphere through the muffler outlet 420. As such, when the primary valve 222 is closed and when the secondary valve 232 is open, the exhaust gas flows sequentially from the engine 26 to the exhaust pipe 202, through the exhaust flow path 230 including the exhaust turbine 350, through the expansion chamber 408 and one of the expansion chambers 412 of the muffler 400 and on to the atmosphere.

It is contemplated that when the secondary valve 232 is open, the primary valve 222 could be selectively open in order to allow a portion of the exhaust gas flowing through the exhaust pipe 202 to flow through the exhaust flow path 220. Such controlled opening of the primary valve 222 could regulate the operation of the turbocharger 300, and thus regulate the amount of compressed air sent to the engine 26. In some implementations, opening the primary valve 222 could aid in decreasing backpressure when the turbocharger 300 is not spooling. Under certain conditions, the blow-off valve 172 and/or the bypass valve 182 could be open as well.

The primary and secondary valves 222, 232 are selectively movable between open and closed positions depending on a threshold engine operating condition and/or a threshold atmospheric pressure. With reference to FIG. 12, the selective controlling of the primary and secondary valves 222, 232 is operated by a system controller 500 operatively connected to an engine control unit (or E.C.U.) 502 and/or the electrical system (not shown) of the snowmobile 10. The engine control unit 502 is operatively connected to the engine 26. The system controller 500 is operatively connected to an atmospheric pressure sensor 504. The primary valve 222 is moved between the open and closed positions by a motor 522 operatively connected to the system controller 500. The secondary valve 232 is moved between the open and closed positions by a motor 532 operatively connected to the system controller 500. The bypass valve 182 is operatively connected to a motor 582 for moving the bypass valve 182, and the motor 582 is operatively connected to the system controller 500. When the atmospheric pressure sensor 504 detects that the atmospheric pressure threshold is reached, the atmospheric pressure sensor 504 sends an electronic signal to the system controller 500. The system controller 500 then executes a program stored in memory to control the motor 522 and/or the motor 532 for selectively controlling the primary and secondary valves 222, 232. The program executed by the system controller 500 may be based on control maps and/or algorithms stored in the memory. Other configurations of the system controller 500, engine control unit 502, atmospheric pressure sensor 504 and motors 522, 532 are contemplated.

It is contemplated that in a situation where the throttle lever 86 is moved such that a high power request is made to

the engine 26, for example during acceleration of the snowmobile 10, the primary valve 222 could be closed and the secondary valve 232 could be open for causing the turbocharger 300 to spool up and feed compressed air to the engine 26. The engine 26 would then benefit from a denser intake charge and would have increased power output compared to a similar engine that would be naturally aspirated. Then, if the throttle lever 86 were to be released, the primary valve 222 could be opened in order to reduce the amount of exhaust gas flowing through the exhaust flow path 230 in order for the turbocharger 300 to spool down more rapidly, since the exhaust turbine 350 and the air compressor 310 are spooling but are no longer required. Reducing the amount of exhaust gas flowing through the exhaust flow path 230 while the turbocharger 350 is spooling down could reduce the amount of backpressure in the exhaust system 200a.

It is contemplated that the threshold atmospheric pressure may be a predetermined range of atmospheric pressure. In such an implementation, the primary and secondary valves 222, 232 are configured to remain in their current positions when the atmospheric pressure passes the mark of the upper and lower limits of the predetermined range of atmospheric pressure. For example, in implementations where the predetermined range of atmospheric pressure is between 800 and 1000 mBar, the exhaust system 200a is configured to close the secondary valve 232 when the atmospheric pressure is above 1000 mBar, thus preventing operation of the turbocharger 300. When the atmospheric pressure is between 800 and 1000 mBar, the secondary valve 232 remains in its current closed position. The exhaust system 200a is configured to open the secondary valve 232 when the atmospheric pressure is below 800 mBar, thus permitting operation of the turbocharger 300. It is contemplated that in some implementations the secondary valve 232 could be open when the atmospheric pressure is between 800 and 1000 mBar and the engine 26 is operated above the threshold operating condition of the engine 26. The threshold operating condition of the engine 26 could be, for example, a threshold engine speed.

An exemplary scenario regarding these aspects is provided for better understanding. Initially, when the snowmobile 10 is ridden at a first altitude where the atmospheric pressure is 1040 mBar, the secondary valve 232 is closed. Then, when the snowmobile is ridden at a second altitude where the atmospheric pressure decreases to 950 mBar, such as when climbing a mountain, the secondary valve 232 remains in its current closed position. When the snowmobile is ridden at a third altitude where the atmospheric pressure drops to 790 mBar, the secondary valve 232 opens when the atmospheric pressure passes the 800 mBar mark. In this situation, the snowmobile 10 benefits from the engine 26 receiving a denser intake charge because of the operation of the turbocharger 300, thus increasing the power output of the engine 26 compared to a similar engine that would be naturally aspirated.

When the snowmobile 10 is ridden from the third altitude to the second altitude, the atmospheric pressure may increase from 790 mBar to 950 mBar. The secondary valve 232 remains in its current open position when the atmospheric pressure passes the 800 mBar mark. When the snowmobile 10 is ridden from the second altitude to the first altitude, the atmospheric pressure increases from 950 mBar to 1040 mBar. The secondary valve 232 is closed when the atmospheric pressure passes the 1000 mBar mark.

Having the secondary valve 232 opening and closing in accordance with the above example may assist in preventing

the secondary valve **232** to open and close repeatedly when the atmospheric pressure is near the threshold atmospheric pressure.

Referring to FIGS. **14** to **16**, a second implementation **200b** of the exhaust system **200** will be described. Various components described in relation to the first implementation of the exhaust system **200a** are found in the exhaust system **200b**, have the same functions and will not be described in detail, unless mentioned otherwise.

In the exhaust system **200b**, the turbocharger **300** has a housing **302b** that differs from the housing **302** shown in FIG. **11** in that the housing **302b** defines the pipe outlet **204** and includes the primary valve **222**. The primary pipe conduit **210** is fluidly connected between the pipe outlet **204** and the muffler inlet **402**, and defines at least a portion of the exhaust flow path **220**. As can be seen in FIGS. **11** and **14**, the exhaust system **200b** is a more compact package compared to the exhaust system **200a**. The operation and the flow characteristics of the exhaust system **200b** are similar to the ones of the exhaust system **200a**. Thus, the primary and secondary valves **222**, **232** are operated as described above with respect to the exhaust system **200a**. As such, the valves **222**, **232** can be selectively closed or open depending on the atmospheric pressure and/or a threshold engine speed for controlling the flow of exhaust gas along the exhaust flow paths **220**, **230**.

Referring to FIG. **17**, a third implementation **200c** of the exhaust system **200** will be described. Various components described in relation to the second implementation of the exhaust system **200b** are found in the exhaust system **200c**, have the same functions and will not be described in detail, unless mentioned otherwise.

The exhaust system **200c** has a transfer conduit **240** (also referred to as a “bridge pipe”) fluidly connecting the primary and secondary exhaust conduits **210**, **214**. The transfer conduit **240** is positioned downstream from the primary valve **222** and upstream from the secondary valve **232**. In situations where the turbocharger **300** is not required but is spooling down, such as when the throttle lever **86** has just been released as described above, the secondary valve **232** is open and the primary valve **222** could, under certain circumstances, be opened. When the primary valve **222** is open, a portion of the exhaust gas flowing through the exhaust flow path **220** flows through an exhaust flow path **250** defined at least partially by the transfer conduit **240** and the secondary exhaust conduit **214**. The exhaust gas flowing through the exhaust flow path **250** flows through the transfer conduit **240**, the secondary exhaust conduit **214**, the muffler inlet **404**, the expansion chamber **408**, one of the conduits **410** and on to the atmosphere through the muffler outlet **420**. The exhaust flow path **250** is more direct than the exhaust flow path **220** as it bypasses the expansion chamber **406** and at least some of the conduits **410** of the muffler **400**. The exhaust flow path **250** also bypasses the exhaust turbine **350** and may assist in reducing the amount of backpressure in the exhaust system **200c**. As such, by selectively moving the primary and secondary valves **222**, **232**, the exhaust gas can flow from the exhaust flow path **220** to the exhaust flow path **230**.

It is contemplated that, under certain circumstances, the primary valve **222** could be closed, the secondary valve **232** could be closed and the turbocharger **300** could be operated. In such situations, the exhaust gas exiting the exhaust turbine **350** and flowing through the secondary exhaust conduit **214** could flow through the transfer conduit **240**, and in the muffler **400** through the muffler inlet **402**. The exhaust gas could then flow through the expansion chamber **406**, the

conduits **410** and the chambers **412**, the expansion chamber **408** and on to the atmosphere. As such, by selectively moving the primary and secondary valves **222**, **232**, the exhaust gas can flow from the exhaust flow path **230** to the exhaust flow path **220**. The muffler **400** could reduce the noise emitted by the engine **26** and/or the exhaust gas flowing to the atmosphere to a greater extent than when the exhaust gas flows through the exhaust flow path **230** when the turbocharger **300** is in operation. However, it is contemplated that such configuration of the exhaust system **200c** could increase an amount of backpressure therein compared to the above example.

Referring to FIG. **18**, a fourth implementation **200d** of the exhaust system **200** will be described. Various components described in relation to the second implementation of the exhaust system **200b** are found in the exhaust system **200d**, have the same functions and will not be described in detail, unless mentioned otherwise.

The exhaust flow path **220** extends from the exhaust flow path **230**. The primary and secondary valves **222**, **232** are omitted and a valve **260** is positioned at the fluid junction of the exhaust flow paths **220**, **230**. The valve **260** is an inverted valve that is movable for simultaneously controlling the flow of exhaust gas flowing through the exhaust flow paths **220**, **230**. A motor **560** is operatively connected to the inverted valve **260** and to the system controller **500** for selectively moving the inverted valve **260**. The inverted valve **260** is movable between a first position for causing the exhaust gas to flow through the exhaust flow path **220**, and a second position for causing the exhaust gas to flow through the exhaust flow path **230**. The inverted valve **260** can also be moved into a plurality of intermediate positions between the first and second positions for selectively controlling the flow of the exhaust gas flowing simultaneously through the exhaust flow paths **220**, **230**. Thus, when the inverted valve **260** is in one of the intermediate positions, a portion of the exhaust gas flows through the exhaust flow path **220**, and the remainder portion of the exhaust gas flows through the exhaust flow path **230**. In such circumstances, the inverted valve **260** can regulate the operation of the turbocharger **300** and thus regulate the amount of compressed air sent to the engine **26** while simultaneously controlling the flow of the exhaust gas through the exhaust flow paths **220**, **230**. The inverted valve **260** cannot be moved to a position preventing the flow of the exhaust through both the exhaust flow paths **220**, **230** simultaneously.

Under certain circumstances, the exhaust system **200d** is simpler to operate than the exhaust systems **200a**, **200b**, **200c** including the primary and secondary valves **222**, **232** since only the inverted valve **260** has to be moved for selectively controlling the flow of exhaust gas through the exhaust flow path **220** and/or the exhaust flow path **230**.

Modifications and improvements to the above-described implementations of the present technology may become apparent to those skilled in the art. The foregoing description is intended to be exemplary rather than limiting. The scope of the present technology is therefore intended to be limited solely by the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A snowmobile comprising:
 - a frame;
 - at least one ski connected to the frame;
 - an engine supported by the frame, the engine having an engine air inlet and an exhaust outlet;
 - a first airbox fluidly connected to the engine air inlet for providing an intake air to the engine;

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an exhaust pipe fluidly connected to the exhaust outlet of the engine;

a turbocharger fluidly connected to the exhaust pipe and the first airbox, the turbocharger including:

an exhaust turbine, and

a turbocharger housing for housing the exhaust turbine;

a second airbox fluidly connected to the turbocharger, the second airbox receiving air from atmosphere surrounding the snowmobile;

an intake bypass conduit for bypassing the turbocharger, the intake bypass conduit being fluidly connected the second airbox to the first airbox;

an intake valve operatively connected to the intake bypass conduit for selectively controlling a flow of intake air from the second airbox to the first airbox;

an exhaust bypass fluidly connected to the exhaust pipe;

an exhaust valve operatively connected to the exhaust bypass conduit for selectively controlling a flow of exhaust gas through the turbocharger, the exhaust valve being selectively movable between at least a first position and a second position; and

a muffler fluidly connected to the turbocharger and the exhaust bypass valve,

in a first position of the intake valve, at least some of the intake air flowing from the second air box toward the turbocharger,

in a second position of the intake valve, at least some of the intake air flowing from the second airbox toward the first airbox,

in a first position of the exhaust valve, at least some of the exhaust gas flowing toward the turbocharger,

in a second position of the exhaust valve, at least some of the exhaust gas flowing toward the muffler.

2. The snowmobile of claim 1, wherein in the second position of the intake valve, the intake valve is open.

3. The snowmobile of claim 1, wherein the intake valve is selectively moved to the second position of the intake valve when the engine is operated above a threshold atmospheric pressure.

4. The snowmobile of claim 1, wherein:

the turbocharger further comprises an air compressor fluidly connected to the engine air inlet; and

when the intake valve is in the first position of the intake valve, the air compressor receives air from the atmosphere via the second airbox.

5. The snowmobile of claim 1, wherein, when the turbocharger is not spooling:

the intake valve is selectively moved to the second position of the intake valve; and

the exhaust valve is selectively moved to the second position of the exhaust valve.

6. The snowmobile of claim 1, wherein the exhaust valve is selectively moved to the second position of the exhaust valve when the engine is operated above a threshold atmospheric pressure.

7. The snowmobile of claim 1, wherein:

the muffler comprises:

a first muffler inlet, and

a second muffler inlet;

when the exhaust valve is in the first position of the exhaust valve, at least a majority of exhaust is directed toward the first muffler inlet; and

when the exhaust valve is in the second position of the exhaust valve, at least a majority of exhaust is directed toward the second muffler inlet.

8. A snowmobile comprising:

a frame;

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at least one ski connected to the frame;

an engine supported by the frame, the engine having an engine air inlet and an exhaust outlet;

a turbocharger fluidly connected to the exhaust outlet and the engine air inlet, the turbocharger including:

an exhaust turbine, and

a compressor;

an air intake system comprising:

a first flow path connecting the compressor to the atmosphere;

a second flow path connecting the compressor to the engine air inlet;

an intake bypass flow path connecting the atmosphere to the engine air inlet for at least partially bypassing the compressor; and

an intake bypass valve for controlling a flow through the intake bypass flow path; and

an exhaust system comprising:

a third flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the exhaust turbine;

a fourth flow path connecting the exhaust turbine to the atmosphere;

an exhaust bypass flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the atmosphere for at least partially bypassing the exhaust turbine; and

an exhaust bypass valve for controlling a flow through the exhaust bypass flow path.

9. The snowmobile of claim 8, further comprising a first airbox fluidly connected to the engine air inlet for providing intake air to the engine.

10. The snowmobile of claim 9, further comprising a second airbox fluidly connected to the turbocharger.

11. The snowmobile of claim 10, wherein the second airbox receives air from atmosphere surrounding the snowmobile, the first flow path passing through the second airbox.

12. The snowmobile of claim 11, wherein a distance of air flow from the second airbox to the first airbox via the intake bypass is shorter than a distance of air flow from the second airbox to the first airbox via the compressor.

13. The snowmobile of claim 11, wherein:

the first airbox includes:

a first inlet receiving air flow from the compressor, and

a second inlet receiving air flow from the second airbox; and

the first inlet and the second inlet are distinct from each other.

14. The snowmobile of claim 11, wherein:

the first air box includes two distinct air outlets; and

the engine inlet is two distinct engine air inlets.

15. The snowmobile of claim 11, wherein a distance between the intake bypass valve and the first airbox is less than a distance between the intake bypass valve and the second airbox.

16. The snowmobile of claim 11, wherein:

the second airbox includes:

a first outlet fluidly connected to the first airbox, and

a second outlet fluidly connected to the turbocharger; and

the first outlet and the second outlet are distinct from each other.

17. A snowmobile comprising:

a frame;

at least one ski connected to the frame;

an engine supported by the frame, the engine having an engine air inlet and an exhaust outlet;

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- a turbocharger fluidly connected to the exhaust outlet and the engine air inlet, the turbocharger including:
 an exhaust turbine, and
 a compressor;
- a first flow path connecting the engine air inlet to the atmosphere, the first flow path passing through the compressor;
- a second flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the atmosphere, the second flow path passing through the exhaust turbine;
- an intake bypass flow path connecting the atmosphere to the engine air inlet for at least partially bypassing the compressor;
- an intake bypass valve for controlling a flow through the intake bypass flow path such that intake air can simultaneously flow through the first flow path and the intake bypass flow path from the atmosphere to the engine air inlet;
- an exhaust bypass flow path connecting the exhaust outlet to the atmosphere for at least partially bypassing the exhaust turbine; and
- an exhaust bypass valve for controlling a flow through the exhaust bypass flow path such that exhaust can simultaneously flow through the second flow path and the exhaust bypass flow path between the exhaust outlet and the atmosphere.
18. The snowmobile of claim 17, further comprising a first airbox fluidly connected to the engine air inlet for providing intake air to the engine.
19. The snowmobile of claim 18, further comprising a second airbox fluidly connected to the turbocharger.

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20. The snowmobile of claim 19, wherein the second airbox receives air from atmosphere surrounding the snowmobile, the first flow path passing through the second airbox.
21. The snowmobile of claim 19, wherein a distance of air flow from the second airbox to the first airbox via the intake bypass is shorter than a distance of air flow from the second airbox to the first airbox via the compressor.
22. The snowmobile of claim 19, wherein:
 the first airbox includes:
 a first inlet receiving air flow from the compressor, and
 a second inlet receiving air flow from the second airbox; and
 the first inlet and the second inlet are distinct from each other.
23. The snowmobile of claim 19, wherein:
 the first air box includes two distinct air outlets; and
 the engine inlet is two distinct engine air inlets.
24. The snowmobile of claim 19, wherein a distance between the intake bypass valve and the first airbox is less than a distance between the intake bypass valve and the second airbox.
25. The snowmobile of claim 19, wherein:
 the second airbox includes:
 a first outlet fluidly connected to the first airbox, and
 a second outlet fluidly connected to the turbocharger;
 and
 the first outlet and the second outlet are distinct from each other.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION


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INVENTOR(S) : Michel Lefebvre et al.

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

In the Claims

Claim 1, Column 21, Line 11, "being fluidly connected" should read --fluidly connecting--

Signed and Sealed this
Twenty-sixth Day of December, 2023


Katherine Kelly Vidal
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office